The Man Picked up by the Gods

Volume 4

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Chapter 1: Reunion 1

It's already been three years since Ryouma parted with the duke's family at Gimuru, and approximately two years since Ryouma retrieved his inheritance.

It was on the morning of such a day, that a carriage departed from the gates of the town of Kereban that was a few days' distance from Gimuru. Within the carriage were the figures of six people. One was an old man who worked as the coachman, while the other five were young girls of marriageable age.

The coachman was the butler of the Jamil Household, Sebasu. And the ones inside the carriage were the daughter of the Jamil Household, Elialia Jamil and her friend and classmate, Miyabi Saionji. Also within the carriage were the eldest daughter of a count, Michelle Willdan, the knight and eldest daughter of a baron, Riera Clifford, and the magic tool craftsman apprentice, Kanan Shuza.

Dressed in inconspicuous clothing, these five young girls have left the capital, and have been travelling with Sebasu-san on a carefree trip.

"It won't be long till the city of Gimuru." [Elia]
"Right~" [Miyabi]
"If everything goes well, we'll be there within 2 days." [Michelle]
"I'm looking forward to seeing the matches being held at the arena." [Riera]
"As for me, I'm most interested in Elia and Miyabi's friend." [Kanan]

These five young girls made use of the academy's extended leave to go on a trip. And are now happily talking about the things they are looking forward to in Gimuru. The reason behind choosing their destination as Gimuru is partly because of Elia's promised reunion with Ryouma. However, that's not the only reason they're going to Gimuru.

In the past two years, thanks to the all the efforts of Gimuru's hired earth magicians and workers, Gimuru was able to complete the new town to the south where the arena is, making the place much more lively than what it used to be. They, especially Riera who aims to be a knight, hope to see the matches of the many adventurers and people that take pride in their skills.

Although this trip might be a carefree one, as three of the young girls are daughters of nobles, they are being accompanied by the head butler of the Jamil Household, Sebasu, who acts both as their coachman and bodyguard. Of course, the young girls' parents had all given them their approval to go on this trip too.

Some time later as the carriage continued to proceed toward their destination, Elia looked out the window. As she gazed at the scenery outside, she muttered, saying

"I've heard rumors of bandits attacking while on the road, but I can't feel even an inkling of such presence." [Elia]
"Gimuru has gotten popular lately, causing the tourists and merchants to increase. Because of that the number of bandits have also increased. However, Gimuru isn't one to take that lying down. In order to deal with them, Gimuru put up requests against the bandits with relatively high compensation. As soon as the rumors circulate, the adventurers gather, and the bandits are dealt with. But in the unlikely situation that we do happen upon some, please rest assured, I will be here to protect you young ladies." [Sebasu]

A first-class magician such as Sebasu could easily deal with bandits while protecting five people. And even if the carriage were to be ruined, Sebasu could still run away with the group in tow with his dimension magic.

"Moreover, the path we're taking is safer than the other paths. There should be little chance of bandits appearing here." [Sebasu]

As he said that, he took the reins of the horse, guiding it toward one of the many roads leading to Gimuru. The path the carriage was headed for was the path that crossed over a mountain.

"Sebasu-dono, why is this path safe?" [Riera]

Having been born to a family that has served as knights for many generations, Riera possessed a wealth of knowledge when it came to dealing with bandits. It should have been common sense that bandits preferred the mountain roads, where they could lie in wait at an opportune place for some unknowing prey. She could not understand why Sebasu would judge the road they were taking to be safe.

At Riera's question, even the other four couldn't help but pay attention to

Sebasu.

“This is something I happened to overhear at Kereban, but apparently, there’s an adventurer that‘s been frequenting this road lately. He goes around subjugating the bandits even without receiving a prior request. Moreover, he makes sure to deal with all of the bandits, not leaving even a single one untouched. Such actions have apparently stricken fear into the hearts of the bandits, causing most of them to stay clear of this road.” [Sebasu]

When the five girls heard that, they were able to understand. Afterwards, they began to talk amongst themselves again. As they did, Sebasu happily watched over them as he drove the carriage.

As their carriage continued through the mountainous road, they passed through other carriages, and even the travelers that were resting by the road. When noon came, the girls had to stop their carriage as well in order to rest and have lunch.. As they ate, they talked about the people passing by.

“This road sure has a lot of people passing through it, huh?” [Kanan]
“I know right? They’re probably gatherin’ here caused they heard that the road’s safe.” [Miyabi]
“Because of that rumor?” [Kanan]
“Most likely. Besides, with this many people passing through here, it won’t be so easy for the bandits to attack either. Well… being safe is nice and all, but I’m a bit worried about the lodging once we get to the next town.” [Michelle]
“The next town’s not that big either too. It’d probably be better if we hurry, huh?” [Riera]
“I don’t think hurrying now would make a difference though.” [Michelle]

They ate like that as they talked amongst themselves. When they finished eating, they began to move again. And fortunately, they were able to make it to the town, before the sun had set.

This town is called Mek. It’s mostly just a stopover town for people to rest while on their way to Gimuru. And as it’s only a day’s distance from Kereban, a lot of people heading to Gimuru drop by.

It was on this town that a problem appeared.

“My deepest apologies, but there are no longer any free rooms…” [Clerk]

“I see…” [Elia]

The six left the inn that refused them. Just as they had feared, they weren’t able to get an inn.

This village is an inn town, so there’re many inns in it. But at the same time, there are also a lot of people heading for Gimuru. Moreover, that already overwhelming number was further increased because of the rumor that’s been circulating. There are some new inns being built, to allow the town to accommodate more people, but unfortunately, they aren’t done yet. As a result, the town’s inns are being constantly filled with people.

If the three daughters of noble lineage were to announce their presence, it would be possible to forcibly take some rooms, but their personal values wouldn’t let them do that. Because of that, they had no choice but to go around to look for an inn. In the end, they were refused, and they finally had no choice but to sleep inside Sebasu’s Dimension Home.

Because they gave up on staying at an inn, the girls weren’t able to experience one of the joys of travelling which was to stay at the inn of the land they are visiting. So instead, they went around to see the gorgeously decorated lively town, window-shopped at a souvenir store, and when they’d whetted their appetite enough, they went to eat supper.

“Does this town have any specialty?” [Kanan]
“There seems to be a lot of delicious restaurants.” [Michelle]
“But because there’s plenty of delicious restaurants, it becomes a dilemma which one to go to.” [Elia]
“Then in that case, I’ll go and ask.” [Kanan]

As Kanan said that, she went to a nearby shop’s clerk, and she began her inquiries. She came back after a while.

“I got some info~. There’s a bar near the west gate of this town called “Woodsman.” There’s also a restaurant with delicious cooking at the east gate at a restaurant called “Tereshi Diner”. And then if we want to eat a variety of foods, the clerk said to go to the northern part of the town as there’re many carts gathered there.” [Kanan]
“Regardless how delicious the cooking may be, it’d be better not to go to the

bar.” [Miyabi]
“It’ll be a pain if we get caught up with some weird guy after all.” [Michelle]
“So that leaves the carts or Tereshi Diner.” [Riera]

There, Elia asked Kanan this.

“I wonder what kind of food the cars serve.” [Elia]
“Ah~…… It’s because Elia’s a lady after all.” [Kanan]

As Kanan said that, Riera began explaining.

“They generally have a lot of food on stick. There’re also plenty of soups and drinks. And then, there’re also places that properly serve food. And even if the disdh is the same, the taste can change depending on the store. A good cart can provide really delicious food.” [Riera]
“Oh? Riera, have you gone to carts before?” [Elia]
“I don’t go that much, but before I enrolled into the academy, my dad sometimes took me. Dad says it’s convenient to eat at those sort of places because it makes it possible for him to have an honest conversation with his subordinates, so because of that, he frequents the food carts.” [Riera]
“So that’s how it its.” [Elia]
“Since Elia doesn’t seem to have any experience with the food carts, how about we eat there?” [Michelle]
“If everyone’s alright with it, then please.” [Elia]
“I’m fine with it! It’s been a while since I’ve gotten to eat from a food cart.” [Kanan]
“I’m alright with the food carts too, but I don’t think that’ll be enough to have our fill.” [Miyabi]
“Then in that case, we can go there to taste some food from the carts. Then if that’s not enough, we can just go eat at a proper restaurant.” [Riera]
“Perfect! As long as we pay attention to the amount we order, there should be no problem.” [Elia]

Like this, the girls headed for the northern part of the town where the carts were gathered.

With Kanan in the lead, the girls headed for the area where the carts were gathered. When they got there, they were greeted by a large, rectangular plaza

that ran along the town's outer walls.

The plaza of the town can be entered through the side road from the main street. Meeting the people entering from the side road are the over 40 carts lined up. There are many customers going around between the carts and the side street. With the hustling and bustling and enthusiasm all together the atmosphere area was like that of a festival's.

"There are so many people." [Elia]
"I haven't gone to food carts all that much with my dad, but from what I've heard, one of the joys of eating at food carts is finding a delicious one amongst all the rabble. With this many carts, there's bound to be one that's delicious." [Riera]
"Let's go and find a delicious place ta eat at already." [Miyabi]

At Miyabi's words, the five of them went to take a look at the food in the carts. Meanwhile, Sebasu nonchalantly made sure that there were no suspicious people around them.

When they found something that caught their eye, the five of them went along with Sebasu-san toward that cart. At first, Elia couldn't calm down as she impatiently carried the skewered meat to her mouth, but after a while, she finally showed signs of getting used to it.

When everyone had their fill, Michelle said this.

"Hmm… I think I'll finish after one or two more. As expected, we won't be able to go see all the carts." [Michelle]
"I think I'll do the same." [Miyabi]
"Right… then what should we eat? We've already eaten all sorts of skewered food, so…" [Elia]
"I'd like to eat something that fills me up more." [Kanan]
"Then in that case, how about that cart over there?" [Sebasu]

As Sebasu said that, he pointed toward a cart with a long queue waiting on it. As the cart was hidden by the crowd of people, the six of them couldn't see the cart. However, there was a sign that was raised up high where the food being sold was written.

"Slime Den Restaurant, special meat buns?" [Michelle]

“From the town of Gimuru… I think that might be…” [Elia]
“Yes. It’s the name of Ryouma-sama’s store.” [Sebasu]
“By Ryouma, you mean Elia’s friend, right?” [Riera]
“Yes. Some time ago he mentioned in his letter that he had employed someone whom he turned into a head chef and opened a store with… But I didn’t know that it was a cart.” [Elia]
“Don’t you think the store’s name might just be an imitation?” [Kanan]

The possibility that Kanan mentioned does exist, but Sebasu promptly denied it.

“That’s genuine. It’s most likely Ryouma-sama’s cart. I also haven’t heard anything about Ryouma-sama’s cart, but he probably came here to spread word about his store.” [Sebasu]

The papers for a cart can easily be done. Moreover, finding a place for one won’t be hard either. Because of that, it’s not strange to have just one or two cooks operating one. Moreover, by spreading word of his own store to all these people heading that are heading toward Gimuru, the possibility that a lot of people might come to his store shouldn’t be hard to imagine.

Hearing that, the five understood. In that case, the next problem would be the taste.

“I’ve never heard of that meat bun dish he’s talking about. What kind of cooking is it?” [Elia]
“It’s seasoned grilled meat mixed with all sorts of ingredients and then packed in a bread. However, the bread used is completely different from a normal bread. The bread used is made not by frying, but by steaming, so it’s extremely soft. And with the juice of the meat permeating into the bread, the taste of the ingredients become superb. I’ve had the pleasure of eating it once, and I have to say, it was absolutely delicious.” [Sebasu]

When Sebasu answered Riera’s question, everyone suddenly became interested in the meat buns.

“It kind of sounds delicious.” [Kanan]
“Shall we go try it? We’ll be meeting him later, so it’ll also serve as a good topic for conversation.” [Riera]

“Still, the line’s pretty darn long…” [Miyabi]
“Moreover, there also seems to be a limit on how much one can buy.” [Michelle]

On the store’s sign was pasted: only two per person. This is to spread the store’s meat buns to everyone, please cooperate.

“Just two, huh? Then I guess I’ll go buy some dessert somewhere. Can you guys buy my portion too? Of course, I’ll buy dessert for everyone.” [Michelle]
“I’ll lend ya a helping hand. Carryin’ six people’s worth of food’s bound to be a handful, right?” [Miyabi]
“Then in that case, I’ll come along too. Riera-sama, please take care of our family’s young lady.” [Sebasu]
“Leave it to me.” [Riera]

Like this, Michelle, Miyabi, and Sebasu left to buy dessert. The ones left in that place were Riera, Elialia, and Kanan. They were lined up at the end of the queue.

Riera felt something amiss when Sebasu chose to leave Elia, whoe he was supposed to protect the most, but her thoughts were interrupted when the other two called out to her.

“What’s the matter, Riera?” [Elia]
“Keep going. The queue’s unexpectedly fast, so if you stop, we’ll become a bother.” [Kanan]
“A, Ah… Right.” [Riera]

What Riera was pondering about was actually what would happen if a situation where she can’t handle occurs. But changing her way of thinking, Riera followed the line. Just as Kanan had mentioned, the line was actually quite fast. At this rate, it shouldn’t be long before it becomes their turn.

The three waited for a while, then their turn finally came. The cart was being operated by two black-haired men who cooked the food and served the customers. The two had the exdact same face and appearance, so they were clearly twins. With Riera in the lead, the three of them closed in to the clerk. The clerk called out to them.

“Welcome!” [Clerk]
“Six meat buns. There’s three of us.” [Riera]

Said Riera as she ordered the meat buns. But as the clerk was about to respond, the clerk suddenly stopped mid-speech.

“Unders――“ [Clerk]

Before Riera, who became wary of the clerk, could say something, the clerk muttered.

“――――Elia?” [Clerk]

When the three heard that, they were more or less surprised, but the one surprised the most was the one whose name was called, Elia. When Elia took a peek at the clerk who called her name, she felt that it was a face she had seen before.

As she tried to recall, she spoke the name of the person that came up in her thoughts.

“Ryouma-san?” [Elia]
“So it really is Elia! It’s been a while!” [Ryouma]

Elia nodded her head to confirm the clerk’s, Ryouma’s, words. And then she smiled.

These two have been keeping in touch with each other through their letters, but letters aren’t able to show one another their appearances. Moreover, they were both going through a period of growing up, so after not having met for three years, they had grown up, and weren’t able to recognize each other with just a glance.

The both of them were taller compared to three years ago. Elia had grown to around 160cm, while Ryouma was half a head taller. And more than anything, Elia’s body was become much more rounded like a woman’s, while Ryouma wasn’t fat by any means, he was body is built with muscles. It can’t be helped that neither of them were able to recognize each other.

Although they were surprised at the sudden reunion, Ryouma and Elia began talking to each other while her friends were left dumbfounded at the realization that the rumored friend was actually the man before them. But then, a man’s voice sounded out from behind them.

“Hey, hurry up—“ [Man]
“Ah, yes!” [Ryouma]
“We can’t talk here, huh?” [Elia]

As Ryouma filled the paper bag with meat buns, he asked Elia.

“Elia, where are you staying at today?” [Ryouma]
“Actually, we couldn’t find an inn because of all the people. So we’ll be staying at Sebasu’s Dimension Home instead.” [Elia]
“Oh… I’m going to close soon, so if you don’t mind, how about we meet later?” [Ryouma]
“Yes, let’s. But where…” [Elia]
“Let’s meet at the Tereshi Diner to the east of this town. That restaurant’s being run by a pair of now married, former adventurers, so it’s safe.” [Ryouma]
“Alright. I’ll see you then.” [Elia]
“Thank you for your patronage. Next customer!” [Ryouma]

After finishing their quick exchange, Elia and her friends left Ryouma’s cart. And just as they left, Michelle and the others who had gone to buy desserts arrived. Elia and the others explained to them what had just happened at the cart.

After eating the meat buns and the desserts, the six of them all gathered at the Tereshi Diner to meet with Ryouma. Speaking of which, the meat buns were a huge success.

Chapter 2: Reunion

The Tereshi Diner was a big restaurant, so the travelers that came to this city would often eat and drink there. At a corner of that restaurant's warm atmosphere were Elia and the others, chatting as they enjoyed their tea.

"So Sebasu, did you know that Ryouma-san was here?" [Elia]
"I did hear that Ryouma-sama has gone through the mountainous road many times, but I wasn't aware that he would have his cart open in this town today." [Sebasu]

At that time, Sebasu saw Ryouma's figure working within the cart through the opening between the people lined up. It was there, that he first realized that Ryouma was in town.

Incidentally, the reason Ryouma was in this town was because Elia had once sent him a letter, informing him that she would use this path to head to Gimuru. Because of that, Ryouma decided to subjugate the bandits in the area. Him deciding to open a cart in this town came after that.

The rumored person they heard of this afternoon is none other but Ryouma. Sebasu was already aware of that. When Elia found out that he knew, she complained and told him that he should have told her. Right around that time though, Ryouma entered the store. Promptly, he was brought to where the girls were sitting, and the clerk called the girls attention.

"Excuse me. I've brought your companion." [Clerk]
"Sorry, I was late." [Ryouma]

After a quick bow, Ryouma called out to Eila.

"Elia, it's been a while. I did mention it just a while ago, but it's great to see you're doing well." [Ryouma]
"Indeed. It really has been a while, hasn't it? Ryouma-san, are you doing well too?" [Elia]

“I did mention it in the letters, but yes… I’m doing fine. By the way, these people are your…?” [Ryouma]

After Elia smiled at Ryouma, he turned to look toward the other girls. The one who received his gaze was Miyabi, who waved her hand.

“Ryouma-han, long time no see. D’ya still remember me?” [Miyabi]
“Miyabi-san, right? Long time no see too. Of course, I remember you.” [Ryouma]
“So ya remembered me, huh? Ta tell ya the truth, I was sort of wonderin’ what I should do if ya didn’t.” [Miyabi]
“Don’t worry, forgetting you won’t be possible, since the impression you left was quite strong.” [Ryouma]
“The way ya talk makes me wonder exactly how it is you’re remembering me, but eh, whatever. That aside, how long are ya planning ta keep on standing? Take a sit.” [Miyabi]

Having been told that, Ryouma took a seat, then he began his introductions to Michelle, Riera, and Kanan.

“My name is Ryouma Takebayashi. I believe the two of you have already seen me back there in the cart, but in any case, I am the owner of the meat bun selling cart and the restaurant, Slime Den Restaurant at Gimuru. But considering that the management is mostly taken care of by the head chef, I suppose it might be better to refer to me as an investor instead. I normally spend my days at home, researching and manufacturing things. When I’m not, I’m out gathering materials and ingredients for my research while carrying out adventurer work. In any case, it’s a pleasure to meet you all.” [Ryouma]
“A pleasure to meet you as well. I am Michelle Willdan. I’m the eldest daughter of the Willdan Household, but please refer to me as Michelle. My hobby lies in magic formation research.” [Michelle]
“So Michelle-san is a scholar of Magic Formations.” [Ryouma]

When Michelle heard Ryouma say that, her eyes sparkled.

“Are you familiar with magic formations!?” [Michelle]
“I know a little from my grandmother, but it’s nothing more than a little introduction.” [Ryouma]
“As Magic Formations is unfortunately a study that’s widely unpopular, there are

few people that know of its existence… Which is why I'm so happy to know that I have some to talk about it with now, Ryouma-kun!" [Michelle]

As Michelle began to grow excited, Riera remonstrated her.

"Calm down, Michelle. We haven't finished introducing ourselves yet." [Riera]
"Oh, sorry, please excuse me." [Michelle]
"Seriously… I'm sorry, Michelle has a tendency to sometimes prattle on like this." [Riera]
"Please don't mind it. There are many people like her amongst my acquaintances, so if anything, it's actually relaxing." [Ryouma]
"Thank you." [Riera]

Said Riera as she sighed, then as her expression stiffened, she introduced herself.

"Please pardon my delayed introduction. I am Riera Clifford. There's no need to be polite with me either. So please just call me Riera. In the future, I plan to become a knight… By the way, a while ago, you mentioned that you did adventurer work. May I know what rank you are?" [Riera]
"My rank? It's C." [Ryouma]

After Ryouma said that, Riera thought to herself for a bit, then she said this.

"I see… If you don't mind, I would like to have a duel with you should the opportunity present itself. I want to know my current strength." [Riera]
"If you're fine with me, then anytime. There is a good place for that very purpose in Gimuru after all." [Ryouma]
"Thank you." [Riera]

Riera bowed, and the next one, Kanan, spoke.

"Next up is me. Name's Kanan Shuza. My family's been working as magic tools craftsmen for generations. So I'm studying both as a magic tools craftsman and as a jeweler. It's a pleasure to meet you!" [Kanan]
"It's nice to meet you as well." [Ryouma]
"By the way, I heard you mention just a while ago that you manufacture things. Can I know exactly what it is you make?" [Kanan]

Ryouma appeared to be a little troubled as he answered Kanan's question.

“If I were to put it briefly, a lot. Medicines, smithing, woodworks. I also make kitchenware such as pots and knives, and even the steaming baskets I used in the cart from before. I make weapons too, but I’m usually making things that are needed for daily life or farming tools… If there’s anything I specialize in in particular, then I guess it’s medicine and magic staves.” [Ryouma]
“You really do make a lot. Ah, as for me, I specialize in grinding jewelry.” [Kanan]

Hearing that, Ryouma asked.

“Kanan-san, do you make jewels right from the grinding stage? A jeweler I know buys his from a specialist that specializes in grinding, which he then uses to create his ornaments.” [Ryouma]
“There are people like that, but the Shuza Family works from the grinding stage to the engraving stage. Because of that members of our family are able to create products all on their own. Part of the reason is because of the necessity in ensuring that the materials used are compatible for magic tool purposes, but it’s mostly because our family’s made up of stubborn craftsmen who don’t want others interfering with their work. Of course, there are also cases where several people work together to make a single product, but that only really happens between a pupil and a master that’s been together for a long time. We don’t really buy jewels from external sources.” [Kanan]

It was in this way that the introductions concluded, and Ryouma and the others got to know each other. There, Ryouma finally ordered. And Michelle asked him a question.

“Do you frequent this store?” [Michelle]
“Yes, actually. I usually have my meals at this restaurant whenever I drop by this town. At first, I was planning on having the leftovers of the cart for supper, but since nothing would be left for met to eat, I decided to eat out instead.” [Ryouma]
“Well, that meat bun really was delicious after all. Still… you seem to be famous here for some reason, and not just because you’re a regular or anything. Is there something going on?” [Michelle]

This is actually something that the others have also been itching to ask.

At first, they thought it would be rude to just enter the store without ordering

anything, so they figured they should order something light while waiting. But when they entered the store, and mentioned they were waiting for Ryouma, the female clerk they were talking to realized that they had already eaten some meat buns from the cart, and she told them that they didn't have to forcefully order something if they're only waiting for Ryouma.

It shouldn't be strange to see customers who take up seats without ordering to be a nuisance, but despite that, no one saw them as a bother.

"It's probably because I order a lot and come here frequently. Moreover, I also helped out a lot of times with the expansion of the town. I used my earth magic to create the area they are building the new lodging on now, you see? Also, each time I would come here, I would order food enough for 10 persons' portion." [Ryouma]

Hearing that, not only Michelle, but even Sebasu and the others were shocked.

"10 peoples' portions every time?" [Michelle]
"Ryouma-san, did you always eat that much?" [Elia]

Having been asked like that, Ryouma explained himself.

"No. I eat the same as a normal person. A single person's serving or maybe two at most. The one eating the remaining food is… I think the three of you who dropped by the cart might have noticed it, but there is another person working at the cart alongside me. The one who eats a lot is that." [Ryouma]
"…There was another person?" [Elia]
"There was. But he was working by the cookware at the back, so he didn't stand out." [Riera]
"I saw him too. That guy had the same face as Ryouma. Is he your twin?" [Kanan]

Ryouma chuckled when he heard Kanan's words.

"We're not twins. Actually, he's not even human." [Ryouma]

Everyone else except for Sebasu was shocked. Sebasu had met Ryouma many times in these past two years, so he already had a good grasp of the situation.

"He's actually a slime." [Ryouma]
"A slime?" [Kanan]
"It's a mimic slime, a slime with the ability to mimic. I have it mimic my

appearance to help out with the cart whenever I put it up. And instead of a salary, I feed it a lot. It may look like a human, but it's really a slime deep inside, so its digestion is really fast." [Ryouma]
"So that's why you're ordering 10 people's portion every time…" [Michelle]
"They even gave us some 'service' thanks to that." [Miyabi]
"It's because I'm an important customer. Besides the people of this shop are all good people and really adaptable."

As Ryouma said that, the food finally came. The waiters lined them up before Ryouma, and Ryouma paid them in chips. Then he began to eat. As he was eating, he asked something that bothered him while they were introducing themselves.

"By the way, why is Sebasu-san the only escort? Is that really ok?" [Ryouma]

The one who answered that question first was Michelle. She threw her chest out as she said.

"It's true that there are nobles who like to bring escorts and helpers in groups whenever they travel, but I hate that sort of stuff. Besides, my mom is a researcher of medicine, and my dad's a researcher in the field of magic formations, so there're plenty of times when they go out to gather ingredients and test out their magic. Because of that, I was also advised to put importance on field work. Accordingly, I normally go out by myself. Besides, Sebasu-san is here too, so there shouldn't be any problems." [Michelle]

The next one who answered was Riera.

"I might be a noble, but I was still born to a knight family. If it's just one or two, I'm fairly sure I can protect myself. Besides, if anyone from my family were to ask for escorts when going out, my family would scold them saying, "If you're aiming for a knight, then you shouldn't be on the side of the one's being protected, but on the side of the one's protecting! Don't be naïve!"" [Riera]

Riera smiled as she said that. Following after her, Kanan spoke next.

"Me and Miyabi aren't nobles to begin with, so we never had any escorts from the start. Even without escorts, a girl can still travel safely as long as she pays to ride a stagecoach. Unless you're carrying a lot of money, or carrying something valuable, or being target by someone, a commoner wouldn't really bother hiring

an escort.” [Kanan]

Hearing their replies, Ryouma was able to understand. After that, they spoke about a lot of things such as when Elia and Ryouma first met or when Elia and the other girls first met. Ryouma was eating while they were talking, so he was mostly just listening.

Around the time when Ryouma finally finished eating, they were a lot more familiar with each other, and could speak their thoughts unreservedly. It was then that they decided to travel together to Gimuru tomorrow.

“We’ll see you tomorrow. Let’s meet by the east gate.” [Elia]

Ryouma and the others left the store. Then the girls’ group randomly picked a place, opened the Dimension Home, entered it, and then passed the night.

Within Sebasu’s Dimension Home that was wonderfully partitioned with a partition screen, inside a room where five beds were lined up, were five girls talking amongst themselves.

“Who would’ve thought we’d actually meet with the rumored Ryouma-kun in this town? Although we did plan to say hi once we got to Gimuru, it seems our plans were pushed forward a bit…Well, what do you all think?” [Michelle]

As Michelle said that, Riera and Kanan began to think. Elia and Miyabi waited for them to talk.

They have heard all sorts of things about Ryouma from Elia and Miyabi, who would sometimes talk about him. But the things they heard were things were all unbelievable things such as a boy who was a year younger than them but could cast intermediate dimension magic or someone who could kill D Rank magical beasts barehanded. This caused Michelle, Riera , and Kanan unable to decide whether what they were hearing was true or not.

It’s not that they suspected Elia and Miyabi to be lying. It’s just that the stories they heard were really hard to believe. Because of that they made it one of their goals in this trip to meet Ryouma in person.

Kanan was the first to speak.

“How to put it… He feels like a normal older brother. The type that could be

seen anywhere… I can't see him being as strong as the stories say." [Kanan]
"But his body seems to be well-built. He mentioned being a C Rank adventurer, so he should have at least that much strength. In any case, I like how he didn't look at us with perverted eyes." [Riera]
"His eyes aside, I'm more interested in his research rather than whether he's strong or not, but I couldn't ask him about it at all today… That slime of his sure surprised me though. It's my first time knowing about a slime that could become anything it eats. If it eats a goblin, it will become a goblin. If it eats a dragon, then it can turn into a dragon." [Michelle]
"He called it a mimic slime, right?" [Elia]

The conversation would sometimes stray, but their impression of Ryouma wasn't bad.

The three who hadn't met Ryouma until now, especially for Riera who had only heard of rumors of a queer and unknown young man, were wary of him. But after their first meeting, they were at least able to understand that he didn't seem to be a dangerous person, allowing them to relax their guard.

Even though it should have been a given that Ryouma wouldn't be a dangerous person as he only came to know Elia thanks to her ducal family acknowledging him, it could be said that Riera having her guard up is due to how serious she was and how strong her feelings were for her friends.

In Michelle's case, she didn't' think of Ryouma as anyone dangerous at all. The only thoughts she had regarding Ryouma was her interest in him as a researcher. From what she's heard, Ryouma's an intellectual. Moreover, the chances of him being an alchemist is high. Because of that she can't help but be restless, eagerly hoping to have a chance to talk with him about magic formation research.

She may not have any proof that he's an alchemist, but from what she knows, Ryouma is the most mysterious person around Elia. As Elia's friend… As a researcher… There were many reasons why she wanted to meet him. And now that she's able to meet him, she can't help but rack her head, trying to think of a way to bring alchemy up in a conversation.

As for Kanan, she didn't hold any special thoughts regarding Ryouma, and was mostly interested in him for being a friend's friend. Because of that, she never

had any preconceptions or bias when they met.

Like this, the girls continued to talk about their impressions until the night grew late. When they reached a point where they could stop, they went to sleep, and retired for the day.

Chapter 3: The Road to Gimuru 1

The Next Day

On a bright and clear day, Ryouma met up with Elia's group by the east gate, and left the town. Sebasu then took out a covered wagon and horse from his Dimension Home. And since Elia's rimel birds were out, Ryouma took his as well from his Dimension Home.

When he did, the rimel birds seemed to recall that they were all from the same flock, and starting from the nightmare and phantom rimel birds, the other rimel birds followed, and they all flew through the skies together.

"Seventeen rimel birds flying sure stands out…" [Ryouma]
"They seem to be having fun, so just let them have their way for now. Rather than that, Ryouma-san, you seem to have two more rimel birds than before." [Elia]
"Yeah, just last year the rimel birds suddenly laid some eggs. That really took me by surprise. How about yours?" [Ryouma]
"All my rimel birds are female." [Elia]
"Oh, I guess it can't be helped then." [Ryouma]

The two continued to chat as they watched the rimel birds until the carriage was ready to depart. Just like yesterday, Sebasu took the role of the coachman while two sat on the sides and three sat on the front and backseats. They sat facing each other. Ryouma's seat was situated the furthest back as it also doubled as a lookout for the rear of the carriage.

The carriage drove, and the rimel birds meandered. They followed the carriage from the skies, and from time to time, they would perch themselves over the carriage's roof.

Inside the carriage, Ryouma took out the necklace that Elia asked him to keep three years ago. He couldn't give it back to her yesterday due to the large

number of people in the area. But now that they were alone, he could safely give it back.

“Elia, here’s the necklace you asked me to keep.” [Ryouma]
“So you brought it with you. Thank you.” [Elia]

With a smile, Elia received the box containing the necklace. Then she put it away in a small item box. After that she whispered to Sebasu, and had him take out two slimes from his Dimension Home.

Those two slimes were none other than the heal slime and scavenger slime that Ryouma had lent Elia. As Elia hugged the two slimes, she made an expression that seemed somewhat lonely.

“These two kids have taken good care of me these past three years. Thank you for lending them to me.” [Elia]
“So you received these two from Ryouma too.” [Michelle]
“The heal slime healed us whenever we got injured while training. It was really a great help. Thank you.” [Riera]

As they said that, they began to caress the slimes. Ryouma fell into a deep thought upon seeing that.

“Ryouma-han?” [Miyabi]
“…Elia, if it’s not too much trouble, could I have you continue raising those as your slave demons?” [Ryouma]

Ryouma’s words shocked Elia.

“I’d be happy to, but… is it really alright?” [Elia]
“Of course. Everyone seems to adore them, and I still have my own heal slimes. So how about keeping them as your own slave demons?” [Ryouma]
“Thank you so much, Ryouma-san!” [Elia]

Like a blooming flower, a smile was drawn on Elia’s face, and Ryouma smiled in return. But because of this turn of event, the discussion was turned toward the heal slimes’ magic.

“So Ryouma-han, I take it you want to gather all the magic using slimes?” [Miyabi]
“Of course, but the journey will be long… I’ve managed to gather some lower

classes, middle classes, and even higher classes in these past three years, which all total to 12 different magic attributes. But from there, the slimes still continue to evolve into slimes that can use several magic attributes, and I still see new slimes here and there, so I don't know when I'll be able to gather all the slimes or whether I can even gather all the slime variations." [Ryouma]
"I think being able to gather 12 types is plenty amazing." [Kanan]
"What sort of slimes can use multiple magic attributes?" [Elia]
"For example…" [Ryouma]

As he muttered that, he brought his hand near the floor of the carriage. When he did, the shadow cast by his hand began to wiggle. Then not long after, it began to stretch itself up, turning into a three-dimensional object. When the five girls saw that, they were scared out their wits, causing them to jump, and shaking the carriage.

"It's alright. Please calm down." [Ryouma]

Ryouma picked the extended shadow, and let it ride over his hand. Then he stretched out his hand for the other to see.

"I'm sorry for scaring you. This is one of the slimes that can use multiple magic elements, a shadow slime. It can use both dark magic and light magic. It specializes in in controlling shadows through the combined effect of the two elements, light and darkness. It also has the ability to move through shadows. Because of that, I normally have it lurking in the shadows as a bodyguard." [Ryouma]
"I-I see…" [Michelle]
"I didn't notice it at all." [Riera]
"The shadow slimes seem to inhabit forests with plenty of magic power and dark places. Like other magic-using slimes, they don't feed on normal food, and instead naturally absorb magic power while lurking within the shadows. Because of that, they're extremely hard to find. In my case, I was only able to find one by coincidence, and was able to immediately capture it. I don't think an opportunity to catch a second will ever present itself. But the shadow slime began increasing itself one at a time, and just recently, they managed to reach 10." [Ryouma]

They continued to talk about slimes after that, but as the trip was long, they also talked about other things.

“How long will your vacation be?” [Ryouma]
“About five months.” [Riera]
“That’s long! Is it really that long!?” [Ryouma]
“When the academy was first founded, the vacation provided was only about two months, but the thing is there are also students who would take up to a month just getting back home. But in exchange for the long vacation, there’s only one or two rest days at most in each week for three years.” [Riera]
“If it’s like that, then isn’t it too short?” [Ryouma]
“The facilities of the academy can be used freely, so self-study is possible. Also there are many who use their free time to work and get money to pay their school expenses. Moreover, there’s an exam at the end of the long vacation based on the course one wishes to take, so considering that its preparation for that, it’s not so bad.” [Elia]
“So it’s like that…” [Ryouma]

The group continued to talk of various things like this. When the carriage had begun to descend the mountainous road, Kanan, who was sitting facing Ryouma, stopped talking, and just stared at his face wordlessly. Ryouma grew concerned of that unmoving gaze of hers, so he decided to ask her.

“Kanan-san, is there something on my face.” [Ryouma]
“That’s not it, but… Do you mind if I touch your hair or your face for a bit?” [Kanan]
“Eh? Ahh, well… I don’t mind.” [Ryouma]

Kanan’s odd request caused Ryouma to tilt his head, but thinking a request of this level was no problem, he let her. When he did, Kanan immediately reached for Ryouma’s face and hair.

“Excuse me…… Oh… Ohhh!” [Kanan]
“W-What is it!?” [Ryouma]
“Kanan, what’s the matter!?” [Miyabi]

Startled with a mix of agitation, concern, and emotion, Miyabi raised her voice as she asked Kanan what was going on. In response, Kanan only turned her neck toward Miyabi as she said.

“Since yesterday, I’ve been thinking that Ryouma’s hair and skin are really

pretty~ When I touched it, it was even better than I expected! Please teach me what methods you use!” [Kanan]
“My skin and hair?” [Ryouma]
“Now that you mention it, he sure is a lot more attentive than our male classmates,” [Riera]
“Sorry, let me touch ya lil’ bit too…… You’re right! His skin really is smooth!” [Miyabi]
“Right!? Craftsman normally end up with rough hands and dry skin, and yet your skin is like this! Please tell me why your skin is so pretty!” [Kanan]
“Ahh, if it’s that then…” [Ryouma]

Hearing Kanan’s girly words, Ryouma began to explain.

“It must be because of the soap I’m using. I mentioned yesterday that I was make medicine, right?” [Ryouma]
“You did.” [Kanan]
“I studied medicine under my grandmother, but I wasn’t able to learn everything. Right now, I’m studying and researching on my own with the books I inherited from her. Because of that, I’ve been making the medicines whose recipes were written down. Among those are the improved soap and the beauty lotion. My grandmother is a girl after all, so she researched that sort of medicine when she was young. If you’d like, I could let you try it out.” [Ryouma]
“Is that alright!?” [Kanan]
“So long as you let me know your thoughts, I don’t mind presenting you some soap and lotion. I’ve confirmed that they’re safe to use, but the effects will vary depending on every person’s skin. If you notice anything, please let me know immediately. Everyone else as well, if you all don’t mind.” [Ryouma]

I’m not sure if the other four were also interested, but they modestly accepted. Then around that time, the rimel birds suddenly began making a commotion.

“What’s going on?” [Michelle]
“It seems there’s something nearby. Sebasu-san.” [Ryouma]
“I don’t sense any nearby humans or magical beasts.” [Sebasu]
“I’ll take a look at the situation through the Rimel Birds.” [Ryouma]
“Me too!” [Elia]

Ryouma and Elia began to use Sensory Link to see through the rimel birds as they ordered them to search the surrounding area. Immediately, two rimel birds at the top of the carriage stood up, and flew. The image the rimel birds were seeing were then sent to Elia and Ryouma's minds. A few minutes later after scouting ahead, Elia was able to confirm that there were 10 men wearing shoddy clothing and armor fighting against three magical beasts.

"That's…" [Elia]
"Did you find something?" [Riera]

Elia's face stiffened at Riera's question.

"There are B Rank magical beasts ahead. Three ogres. They're currently in the middle of a battle." [Elia]

Those words sent the atmosphere within the carriage into a turmoil. The ogre may be a weak, B Rank magical beast, but that doesn't change the fact that it's a dangerous magical beast to them. So it's not strange at all for them to be so tense.

But while the girls seemed to be in a panic, Ryouma, who had been ordering his rimel bird to fly quickly to see the situation, spoke.

"Everyone, please don't worry. Those ogres are Uncle Harold's… They're the slave demons of someone I know. I've also confirmed the presence of my acquaintance, so I'm not mistaken. From their clothing, the enemy seem to be bandits, so it's just a bandit subjugation request." [Ryouma]
"I've also confirmed it." [Elia]

Hearing that, the tension immediately loosened. Then Riera asked how the situation was.

"Do they need assistance?" [Riera]
"There's an overwhelming gap in strength. I don't think there's any need to worry about them." [Elia]
"That's right. But the bandits that have run are headed here, so I'll just go out for a bit." [Ryouma]
"Ah, wait!" [Kanan]

As Ryouma said that, he jumped off the back of the carriage. Then ignoring

Kanan’s attempt to stop him, he ran off.

Ryouma has already gone through this road many times, so he already had a good grasp of the bandits’ escape routes. And considering, there’s Sebasu and the rimel birds to protect the carriage, there probably won’t be any problems. Ryouma ran to the place he saw through the rimel birds.

A minute later, the running bandits’ figures entered Ryouma’s sight. At the same time, he also saw the man they were up against. Ryouma readied himself to break through.

The bandits numbered 5, but it seems there were still some men coming from behind them. As Ryouma confirmed that, he shortened the distance, and the battle between Ryouma and the bandits began—— or at least that’s what should’ve happened.

“If you don’t want to die, then…” [Bandit 1]
“Huh!?” [Bandit 2]
“Aniki!! Ugh!” [Bandit 3]
“Wh–!” [Bandit 4]
“…” [Bandit 5]

But what happened instead couldn’t even be called a fight. As Ryouma passed through them, he used his magic power-clad fists to knock every single bandit out.

Magic Battle Technique ‘Sleep Fist’

By cladding the fist with the poison magic, ‘Sleep Shot’, a kind of magic that shoots out a lump of magic power that causes one’s foes’ to faint, one is able to make his enemies sleep with magic and fighting techniques. This is a technique that Ryouma became able to use in these past two years, an anti-personal magic catered for arresting people. Depending on the situation, Ryouma also has the ‘Paralyze Fist’, which can paralyze people or the ‘Poison Fist’, which could worsen people’s health.

Ryouma struck a daunting pose as he towered over the unconscious bodies of the poor bandits. As he sent the shadow slimes to surrounding tree’s shadows, he remained standing as he waited for the other bandits to reach him.

When the other bandits saw their friends sleeping by Ryouma's feet, they stopped. But with three ogres behind them and a burly, old man dressed in a shirt a size smaller than he should be wearing, chasing after them as he beat the bandits that were too slow barehanded. The bandits didn't have the time to think, and they had no choice but to attack Ryouma. Their resistance, however, was futile. Some were faster, and some were slower. But such things didn't matter as they were all destined to reach the same end.

Before them was Ryouma. Behind them were the ogres. And then by their sides were the shadow slimes, lurking. They were already completely surrounded.

Chapter 4: The Road to Gimuru 2

There were six others aside from the ogres and the bandits who saw Ryouma's one sided slaughter that couldn't even be called a fight.

"Amazing. I don't know much about martial arts, but I can tell Ryouma-kun's really strong." [Michelle]
"Can you really sum that up in such few words?" [Riera]
"I don't think there's really anything else to say though." [Michelle]

From the girl's perspective, Ryouma's fight was nothing short of a performance.

Above a bandit that ran to attack Ryouma with his one-handed sword, was a bandit that was sent flying by the ogres. The flying bandit flew past the running bandit as he approached Ryouma. Ryouma caught that bandit, then with a turn, Ryouma bashed the other bandit with that bandit.

But at the last moment, the bandit managed to jump to the right, avoiding the other bandit in Ryouma's hand. Taking that opportunity, Ryouma extended his hand toward the opening of the bandit's one-handed sword. Then as Ryouma dropped the other bandit, he grasped the sword with his left hand, and as he swept his right hand, he entered into his opponent's chest. Finally, with an elbow strike from his right to the chin of the bandit, he knocked him unconscious.

At that moment, another bandit came attacking at him. Ryouma averted the tip of that bandit's sword that came piercing at him with his right hand. Then continuing with that momentum, he grabbed the bandit's wrist and arm, and with a karate chop, he knocked a second, unconscious.

But just as Ryouma finished knocking down a second, at nearly the same time, a bandit swung his great sword down behind Ryouma. Ryouma immediately

thrusted the unconsciouss bandit away, then as he turned his body, he dodged the great sword, and at the same time, he landed a backhand blow on the bandit's chin.

However, the bandit was able to barely dodge the backhand blow. In no time at all, however, Ryouma stepped in with his left foot, and sent a kick flying from his right leg. The kick landed itself onto the hands carrying the great sword, forcing the bandit to release his weapon as it grazed past his face.

But at the same time, something had hit the bandit's stomach. The very same moment Ryouma sent a kick flying toward the bandit, he chantlessly casted earth needle, attacking the bandits from a place hidden by the shadow of his feet.

The earth needle couldn't pierce through the armor, but it imparted a shock no different from a pillar crashing into a body. The strength of that force momentarily caused the bandit to blank out, giving Ryouma time to pull back his leg. Then with a fist to the brow, Ryouma knocked his third one down.

All these took place within only a span of a few seconds. Ryouma's precise movements that hadn't any unnecessary moves in it made short work of the bandits. Were this the arena, Ryouma might just be accused of match fixing. That's how one-sided the fight was. But what the bandits did next left Elia and the others puzzled.

"It's the Cleaner! Run!!" [Bandit 1]
"You think I'll let myself be caught here!? Damnit!!" [Bandit 2]
"I won't attack anyone anymore! Please let me go!!" [Bandit 3]

For some reason, the bandits suddenly started panicking. Ryouma hadn't used any magic that attacked one's mind, and yet all these people were clearly mentally affected.

Those bandits were also beaten up. After everything ended, they checked whether there were still any survivors left along with the recovery of the dead bandits and the bandits that were still alive. While they were doing that, Elia and the others decided to stop the carriage, and take a break there.

"Sebasu, why are those people scared of Ryouma-san?" [Elia]
"And Ryouma-kun was also making a sad face." [Kanan]

“It’s a long story, so cutting it short… Everything started due to Ryouma’s bandit subjugation during his journey.” [Sebasu]

In the past, Ryouma happened upon 10 bandits whom he subjugated.

Those bandits were affiliated with the Dark Guild. They were the leaders of a small branch of a fairly large bandit organization who came out to show off the strength of their tiny branch as well as give some orders.

Due to having their leaders arrested, the bandit organization attacked Ryouma’s house in revenge, but they were instead done in. Most of the bandits were arrested, but they were turned into guinea pigs for Ryouma’s new medicines.

Other bandits came to take revenge, but Ryouma, starting to get fed up with them, decided to leave an opening to let them escape, and reveal their home base. But what Ryouma ended up finding wasn’t the home base of the bandits, but rather the home base of a branch of the Dark Guild.

Thinking it would be foolish to make a move alone, Ryouma decided to contact the duke’s household. Ryouma left the matter to the duke’s household, but from the time Ryouma contacted the household to the time the branch of the Dark Guild was destroyed, the things Ryouma had done were exaggerated. Rumors amongst the bandits began to circulate, saying malicious things such as Ryouma capturing bandits and inflicting excruciating pain upon them, or Ryouma slowly torturing people as he beat them and healed them to death.

“And because of that, the bandits are now scared out of their wits of him, huh?” [Elia]
“Yes. Due to a rumor that’s quite different from the truth.” [Sebasu]

While it’s true Ryouma is still using bandit test subjects to this day to test his medicines on, he first tests the medicine on goblins to distinguish which of his potions are poison and which are not. He checks whether there any strong side effects, so he doesn’t try out medicines on humans aside from those that are generally safe.

Because of that, there were rarely any cases of someone dying due to his experiments. The bare necessities (water, food… etc.) were provided, there were no unnecessary violence either, and in order to hand them over healthy to the

guards of Gimuru, Ryouma's been dealing with the bandits who aimed for his life, humanely. But unfortunately, the rumors turned everything upside down.

"Thanks to Ryouma-sama, the bandits around Gimuru had been reduced for a period, and even the people who tried to bring prohibited goods into the arena were lessened. We're really grateful for it, but it seems Ryouma-sama's somewhat bothered whenever he sees the bandits so scared of him." [Sebasu]
"Seeing someone so scared of you just from seeing you… It probably can't be helped." [Kanan]

Here, Michelle asked Riera.

"By the way, Riera. You asked for a match yesterday from Ryouma, right? What are you gonna do now?" [Michelle]

Riera made a troubled face for a moment, but not long after, she recovered herself, and calmly answered with resolve.

"Mn… No, there's no problem. I'm not fighting to win. The match is to let me know my current strength." [Riera]
"Good. Even I can't win against Ryouma in a one-on-one, so it's better to focus on studying rather than on winning." [Sebasu]

Hearing that, Kanan asked Sebasu.

"Sebasu-san, just exactly who is Ryouma-kun? Putting the battle just now and Sebasu-san's story, it almost seems as if his story of being a C Rank adventurer is a lie." [Kanan]

Having been told that, Sebasu answered.

"Ryouma-sama being a C Rank isn't a lie. However, because Ryouma-sama spent his time these past two years on other jobs, his studies, and even in philanthropic work, he has rarely taken any adventurer jobs. If it was just his abilities, then he wouldn't lose out to an A Rank adventurer." [Sebasu]

When the girls heard that, everyone except for Elia was surprised, causing them to renew their image of Ryouma. After Ryouma finished gathering the bandits, he returned with an old man.

"We're done. By the way, let me introduce Harold-san. He is a slave demon

magic user just like myself.” [Ryouma]
“Hi, I’m Harold. Sorry for bothering you all while you’re on your trip.” [Harold]

Harold bowed his head as he said that.

“Harold-san is an A Rank adventurer, so he teaches low ranked adventurers, children aspiring to be adventurers, and the guards in my stores how to fight. Today, the best amongst the trainees are fighting bandits under Uncle Harold as well as other teachers to gain experience. The bandits from before were apparently those that got away from the trainees’ encirclement.” [Ryouma]
“So that’s how it is. Sorry for bothering you. But thanks to you and your friends, we’ll be able to have a safe trip. Thank you for you work.” [Elia]
“Thank you. Now if you excuse me, I need to rendezvous with my comrades now. Also, Ryouma, those boys are still too naïve. They still need plenty of working.” [Harold]
“There’s no need to hurry, so please take care of them until it’s safe to send them out. Should you need any help, please feel free to inform me.” [Ryouma]

Harold told Ryouma to leave it to him, then he took the three ogres with him, and he left toward the direction fo the trees. There, Sebasu handed a glass filled with water and a towel to Ryouma.

“Please.” [Sebasu]
“Thank you, Sebasu-san.” [Ryouma]

Ryouma lightly wiped the sweat of him, then as he took a mouthful of water, and a short rest, Elia spoke to him.

“Ryouma-san, what was that last thing you were talking about?” [Elia]
“Oh, didn’t I mention it? We started raising up some human resources in Gimuru. I am also a teacher actually… By the way, what happened to those four?” [Ryouma]
“Don’t worry, they’re just having some issue putting together common sense and reality together after seeing you fight.” [Elia]
“So long as they’re not scared, I guess it’s fine.” [Ryouma]

At the other end of Ryouma’s gaze were the four girls, but Ryouma didn’t say anything to them as he took a short break and had some snacks.

It might have been because they had already heard of Ryouma before, but

after the break ended, the four were back on their feet. And they chatted just as they did before the bandtis came out.

The carriage continued to descend the mountain, and just before the sun set, they managed to reach the western gate of Gimuru, where a line of carriages had formed.

“We’ve finally arrived, but the line sure seems long.” [Kanan]
“There are a lot of carriages, so it’s probably some sort of merchant group, and is probably going to take a lot of time, right?” [Riera]
“…They’re examining the luggage, so I think it will take a lot more time.” [Michelle]
“I don’t mind waiting, but I wonder whether we’ll be able to get some rooms today? It’s also the same time as yesterday, but…” [Riera]

The one who answered Riera’s thoughts were Ryouma.

“There are plenty of lodging for tourists, so you’ll be able to get an inn. If there’s any issue, it would be the quality of the room.” [Ryouma]
“Any recommendations?” [Michelle]
“Hmm……Rather than the new town, I think it’ll be better to go to the lodging in the first town. There are also guards in town number two, but there’s a lot of people, so it’s noisy, and there are plenty of pickpocketing going on too. It’s safe enough to go out in the night, but the first town’s quiet and safe.” [Ryouma]
“Is there anything we should be careful of in Gimuru?” [Riera]
“Nothing in particular, but… Ah, there’s one. There’s an inn built specifically for slave demon magic users and a resting area for slave demons by the gate of the second town. It’ll be best to stay away from it. The slave demon magic users and conjurers there are generally bad folks.” [Ryouma]

Ryouma continued.

“While it’s good that the jobs in the town increased thanks to the new town, there are some bad folks amongst the people who came here to work for the tamer guild. They would drink themselves drunk, rampage with the ir magical beasts, walk around, showing off their strength and scaring other people… And in the worst case, there are even those who pick fights inside the town with their magical beasts.” [Ryouma]

“That bad?” [Michelle]
“The really bad ones are being caught one after another, but as I’ve said, the bad folks stay in that particular inn. There are also good people amongst the slave demon magic users who came to help the construction of the new town, but the ones stand out. Because of that, people have started to look badly on slave demon magic users, and… Oh, I’m sorry. I started ranting.” [Ryouma]

As Ryouma apologized, the other five told him not to mind it.

“It must’ve been tough for you, huh, Ryouma-han? Enough to complain at least.” [Miyabi]
“You don’t have to hold back. Just throw everything out.” [Kanan]
“Thank you very much.” [Ryouma]

Suddenly, the line began to move quickly.

“Ah, looks like the carriages of that merchant group finally got through… Huh? Up to where did we talk? Well… so long as you gain the trust of the people, there shouldn’t be any problem. It’s not a big deal, so it should be fine. It’s not just me, even Uncle Harold who is a slave demon magic user from another place is an honest person and is trusted. Rather than that, let’s begin to enter the town.” [Ryouma]

As Ryouma said that, they each took out of their chest and bags their respective proofs of identities. When they were ready, they talked about what they would do after they enter the village. There, they decided to first rest at the inn. It wouldn’t be nice after all if the girls were to suddenly fall sick or something, so they decided to rest up first, and begin sightseeing tomorrow.

Finally, after going pass the gate, it was Ryouma’s turn to shine. Ryouma guided the girls and Sebasu to a nice inn that, while not luxurious by any means, was clean and had good food for the price.

The girls took a room there, and after Ryouma volunteered to tour the girls tomorrow, he went back home to his house in the abandoned mine.

Chapter 5: Tour 1

Name Change: (More accurate) Perle Bekentein -> Perdre Bekentein.

The Next Day

I woke up at the Rimel Bird's cry. As I stood up from my bed, I rubbed my eyes. And when I got down, I stretched my body.

"Guu… Fuu. Alright. I have to prepare." [Ryouma]

I washed my face, and woke myself up. Then I went to make myself a quick meal with the help of my mimic slime. My breakfast for today is bread with peach-like jam and fried bacon. On the side, there's cheese and herb salad. And then for my drinks, there's goat milk.

The mimic slime before me skillfully handled the knife and fork. From the outside, it really looked like a human. Thinking of the time when it couldn't walk really brings me back… At first, it couldn't walk properly. It wasn't until a few weeks after it first transformed into me that it finally learned how to move on its own. But even then, that was just a crawl. It took several more months after that before it was finally able to walk and graduate from a babe to an adult.

But after that, I found out that I could train the mimic slime faster with the use of Sensory Link, so its growth sped up from then on. Sensory Link allowed me to find out which parts it was having a hard time emulating, so I could focus on the parts that needed to be focused on when training it, allowing it to learn faster.

After that, I used Sensory Link to train and confirm the things the mimic slime could do, and I found out that on top of being able to walk and run, it can now also fight. It could also help out in cooking, woodworking, and smithing with no problem. Unfortunately, it's still not able to talk, but if it could, then it would really become indistinguishable from humans.

After eating, I dressed myself, and then left the house. As I ran, I used

Dimension Magic to reach the town. Along the way, something caught my attention.

“This place has changed a lot too…” [Ryouma]

What got my attention was the surrounding scenery that had changed much since the time when I trained with Elia. If I were to give an example, then I suppose the landscape of the mountain of the abandoned mine and the patch connecting it to Gimuru were the biggest changes.

First off is the landscape. 2 years ago there were plenty of rocks, but right now, aside from the road I and my slimes use, everything else is covered in plants or weeds. There are now also thickets of various kind of bamboos growing near the entrance of the mine.

If you’re wondering why that happened, it’s because Gayn and the other gods wished for it, so I made it happen.

Because of the treatment of the demon king’s influence that required me to visit them once a week and the feast we would have each time I did, the number of opportunities there were for me to talk with them increased… And as a result I also ended up hearing a lot of the back talks of the gods.

One of the things talked about was regarding the close relationship between nature and the mechanism set by the gods that creates magic power. Putting it simply, the more nature there are, the higher the efficiency of the magic power created by the world. Conversely, if nature were to be destroyed, then the amount created would lessen. There they told me it would help them out a lot if I could grow something at the mine’s mountain.

Although it’s something they said while drunk, I asked Pioro-san about bamboos the preceding day. Incidentally, I managed to ask the god of farming, Grimp, whether bamboos would grow since they have strong vitality. And since he gave his approval, I decided to try growing them.

After deciding how far I’m comfortable with the bamboo thicket growing, I buried some iron plate into the ground, and created a sturdy wall to create a boundary. It took quite a bit of effort, but bamboo does have a lot of avenues, and Gayn and the others would be happy, so I think the effort was worth it.

I built pavements for roads in order to exhaust my magic power, and increase my maximum magic power, so while it wasn't necessary for me to build the roads, I didn't do a half-assed job of it either. Because the pavements I made for roads were based on the roads from Earth, I inclined the roads, and dug a gutter at the sides to provide a place for the rain water to flow to. Because of that the road I made ended up being fairly well done.

My store and this road that I made caught the eye of the architect, Perdre Bekentein, so he asked me to become his subordinate. I politely refused his offer.

Incidentally, Perdre Bekentein is a young man who has only reached his latter twenties, so he's quite fierce and self-absorbed. And although he wasn't what I would call humble, he does praise people when they deserve to be praised. He was also a skilled architect, so his subordinates had much faith in him.

When I refused his offer, he actually told me to contact him whenever I felt like, and then immediately withdrew. We could also talk lightly with each other whenever we happened upon each other in town. His character might be a bit strong, but he's not a bad person…

"Oh, I've arrived." [Ryouma]

Caught up in my own thoughts, before I knew it, I was right in front of Gimuru's northern gate. As expected, using dimension magic makes travel quick. Thanks to it the distance from my house to the gate actually felt like a 10-minute walk from my house in my previous life to a nearby train station.

As I slowed myself down, I took out my adventurer guild card from my chest, and called out to the gatekeeper. I showed my proof of identity because of the rules, but actually, in these past three years, I could already pass by with just my face as proof.

Nothing particular happened as I did, so I just passed through the gate as usual, and went over to Elia's inn.

The inn Elia and the others were staying at was situated at the center most area of the town near the adventurer and merchant guilds. Because of that a lot of people recognized me, and I had to greet them back as I walked.

"Ah, good morning, Sebasu-san." [Ryouma]

“Good morning, Ryouma-sama. Ojousama and the others will soon finish their preparations, so please wait for a while.” [Sebasu]

Said Sebasu-san who was preparing a coverless carriage in front of the inn. But just as he was telling me that, the door to the lodging opened, and Elia’s friend, Michelle-san, stepped out.

“Ah, Ryouma-kun, good morning. So you were here already. Did we make you wait?” [Michelle]
“Good morning, Michelle-san. I just got here actually.” [Ryouma]
“I see. Well, Elia and the others will come soon.” [Michelle]

Just as she said, not even a minute passed before Elia and the others stepped out of the inn. However, the clothes they were wearing today was a little different compared to yesterday. Their clothes were made of good fabric, and they were all wearing jeweled silver accessories. Elia wore a hair clip, Kanan, a bracelet, Riera, a pair of earrings, and Miyabi, a ring.

Well they are young girls of age, so I suppose wanting to doll up is normal. Anyway, I better say hi.

“It seems you’re all wearing clothes different from yesterday. Especially the accessories.” {Ryouma}
“Oh, right. This is your first time seeing these, huh?” [Miyabi]
“We removed our accessories during the trip because we thought it might cause us to be targeted.” [Michelle]

Michelle-san’s accessory was a pendant hidden within her clothes. Since she went out of her way to bring it out, and show me, I took a good look. There, I noticed that all of their accessories had the same flower emblem engraved into it.

The engraved flower was a collection of thin and long petals. If one were to look above it, the flower would appear to be round. Look from the side, and the tip of the petals could be seen to be rounded, running along the stems, making the flower appear to be an inverted triangle. This flower is known as Tertos. It has seven different color variations, but is also a medicinal ingredient. It’s because of that that I’m privy to it.

“This is the flower of Tertos, right? …That’s amazing… It’s been engraved so

well. The jewel inlayed at the center is also beautiful.” [Ryouma]

My frank comment was met with Elia’s smile.

“These accessories are something Kanan made herself after we formed our group.” [Elia]

I alternately looked between the accessory and Kanan-san upon hearing that. Then I said,

“Kanan-san, you’re amazing.” [Ryouma]

Those were the only words that came out, but those alone were enough to leave Kanan in a blush as she laughed and waved her hands.

“Y-You’re praising me too much… The thing is I haven’t been making anything else aside from magic tools, so it actually took me a lot of time to figure out how to make these. Also… I’ve always liked the flower, Tertos, so I’ve had plenty of practice engraving it.” [Kanan]

She doesn’t seem to be used to praise. Still… she sure seems happy. Her face has completely melted into a grin, and being from the dog tribe, her tail’s wagging like crazy. With that small figure of hers at 150cm, she sure looks like a puppy.

By the way, I can also engrave. The iron weights I’m using for training are bracelet-types. Apparently, Tekun wasn’t very happy with them, saying “If you’re going to make a bracelet, then you might as well be able to do it properly, and make some ornaments.” Because of that I had to learn the basics of engraving.

However, the most I could make are cheap stuff that wouldn’t sell for much. It’s a far cry from Kanan-san’s quality.

Should I take this opportunity to practice my engraving skills? As I was thinking that, I rode the carriage with Elia and the others, and headed for the second town. We’re supposed to go straight to the arena, and watch some matches, but for some reason, Elia wouldn’t stay put.

“Elia, is there something wrong?” [Ryouma]
“Everything’s changed so much in these past 3 years, so I can’t help but be curious.” [Elia]

“Yeah, well as the second town neared completion, there were also stores that moved there. As a result, the town’s changed a lot. Even the manager of the lodging we stayed at before has changed in these past three years.” [Ryouma]
“Really?” [Elia]
“There are more people in the new town, allowing better chances of profit. Because of that inns, weapon stores, and armor shops, relocated themselves there. There were also a number of stores selling ingredients that moved… Ah, for the record, I’m not saying that the first town is being deserted. It’s just that people who will fight in the arena will have to stay for an extended period over at the second town. Moreover, there’s also the fight money. So there are a lot of people who decided to make money off of that. In exchange, there are more houses relocating themselves in the first town in place of the stores. Thanks to that, there are a lot of construction left to be done.” [Ryouma]

Elia became somewhat relieved upon hearing my words. Though at the same time, an expression of anxiety also showed on her face. But following up on it a bit more, it appears she’s at least relieved. What I said wasn’t a lie, so it’s all cool. But more than anything, I’d prefer it if she just enjoys herself without thinking too much.

The carriage left the southern gate as we were talking, and finally, the gate of the second town entered our vision.

“This is the new town, Gimuru 2. To match with the first town, this new town was built with town 1 in mind, giving it a long elliptical shape extending from the south to the north. The gates of the two towns are 400 meters apart, so the southern road is able to effectively connect the middle of the two towns.” [Ryouma]

After that we passed through the gates of the second town, and we headed toward the arena. However, unlike with the first town, Elia and the others were quite surprised.

The buildings in the second town were made in the same way as the first, but the roads were all gaudily decorated. There was also a great crowd of tourists crowding the streets.

“The capital still has more people, but this place sure is lively.” [Riera]

“This town was built specifically for commerce after all. If it weren’t lively, it would be troubling. Aside from the arena, there are also souvenir shops, playgrounds, brothels, and other various stores… There’s enough to accommodate 40,000 people.” [Ryouma]
“If we get lost, it’ll be a problem, so we be better to take care.” [Michelle]

People and carriages alike littered the second town, causing the carriages to slow into a walk. Due to that we were chased after by many of the peddlers and many of the clerks, asking us to take a look at their wares or store. It wasn’t until fifteen minutes later before we finally arrived at the stop for carriages provided by the arena.

The arena was situated at the center of the second town. It had four floors, two of which were below the ground, and two of which were above. From the outside, it looked like a shrunken ellipsis.

When I first heard of an arena, the first thing that came to my mind was the image of a colosseum that I had learned in my student days, but this one’s a bit different. First off, the exterior of the building that’s a made out of stone has windows attached to them. Each of the window frames has a transparent glass affixed to them, allowing light to enter. Moreover, over the roof of the arena were statues of warriors dressed in armor, wielding all sorts of weapons from bows to swords, to axes, to spears, to magic staves… all sorts.

Inside the arena, the first and second floors had the painting of warriors painted over one side of the walls. There were also statues furnished here and there, but relatively speaking, the design simple. According to the architect, Perdre Bekentein, making the place the customers should enter needed to be emphasized.

Conversely, the basement floors that’s only used by the staff and the contestants are a bit more complicated.

“Good work, everyone. This is our destination. Considered the heart of the city, even in the sense of commerce, welcome to the are—“ [Ryouma]
“WaAAAAAA!!”

Oh? Did someone’s match end? I’ve come here many times before, but every time I come here, I can’t help but be impressed at how amazing noise and cheers

are.

“Looks like the matches have started already. Let’s go..,. Oh, right.” [Ryouma]

Suddenly remembering something, I asked Elia and her friends for a favor.

“Sorry for suddenly bringing this up, but I’d like to ask you guys a favor.” [Ryouma]
“What is it?” [Miyabi]
“Actually, I have a store here in the arena. It’s a store that sells food for spectators to eat as they watch the matches. So I’d like to ask you all to buy from it, and tell me how it’s doing.” [Ryouma]
“I don’t mind, but wouldn’t it be better to ask the people in charge how the store’s doing.” [Elia]
“Yes, but I’d like to know the opinion of a customer buying as well as the normal behavior of the employees. There’s a lot of new hires right now, so if I personally checked up on them, they’d stiffen up.” [Ryouma]

It’s what you would call mystery shopping. After I told them I wasn’t able to check up on the store since I went around subjugating bandits, leading me to think of now as a good opportunity, Miyabi-san was immediately able to come to terms with it and agreed. The other four also didn’t have any problems, so they agreed too. Because of that it was decided that I would be the one covering the expenses they would spend at my store.

As we decided that, we paid the entrance fee, and entered the arena. Inside, there were two stairs at the left and right, extending upwards and downwards. The participating contestants have to go down the stairs.

At the front, there’s the bullet board recording the details of the gambles made and the schedule for the matches. Beside that is a ticket window. Should one want to gamble, he or she would have to pay through that ticket window, and then receive proof that he or she has made a bet. If that person wins, then he or she can take the proof to the ticket window, and receive her dividend.

I think I’ve pretty much explained everything there is about the arena.

“Any questions?” [Ryouma]

No else had any questions when I asked that. Incidentally, no one gambled

either.

“Ryouma-kun, do you gamble?” [Michelle]
“No. I don’t gamble either.” [Ryouma]

Even though back in my previous life, I thought of trying it out if ever I had money to burn. But now that I have the money, I realized, I’m not really that interested. I have gambled several times, but it wasn’t fun whether I won or not. Well I think it’s better than getting addicted to gambling, and ruining one’s health though.

After that, I told the girls the locations of the store. After that, we split, and I headed to the seats by myself. I’ve already told them the place, and there are 6 shadow slimes lurking in their shadows, so there shouldn’t be any problem. If they take too much time, I can just go and look for them.

“Now then… Let’s do our best and look for a good se— woah!” [Ryouma]

The centermost front row is free! Get ‘em!

Chapter 6 Tour 2

Beneath the blinding light of the sun, within the passionate zeal of the spectators, was me, sitting to the right of the stone pedestal, at the middlemost seat of seven chairs.

As I somehow managed to secure seats for everyone, I felt Elia's group nearing through the shadow slimes lurking in their shadows. I looked toward their direction, and I saw them through the gaps between the many spectators. I waved my hand, and they came over.

"Ryouma-han~ sorry for making ya wait." [Miyabi]
"We bought some drinks. And umm… is this crushed ice ok?" [Kanan]

Kanan-san handed me a transparent bag filled with transparent ice and fruit juice, with a straw sticking out.

"Thank you very much." [Ryouma]
"It's been really hot lately, so I ended up buying as soon as I saw something cold." [Kanan]
"Well I started selling crushed ice because of the heat, so if you bought it for that reason, then guess it's a success." [Ryouma]

Crushed ice is a product based on my previous life's memories. Right now, I'm selling it as one of my shop's limited products, and is currently one of my best-selling goods.

Products like ice, ice cream, and sherbet have actually existed long before I even came to this world despite them not having fridges. They were able to make them through the employment of magicians, but because of that, there weren't a lot of stores that could sell them. It wasn't easy to make them even with one or two magicians due to the limits of magic power. Plus, adding to the fact that sugar was a necessary ingredient to make sherbet and ice cream, they naturally ended up being expensive.

But in our store, the ones creating the ice are ice slimes who can use ice magic and the many slimes that could use barrier magic. Because of that our store can afford to sell a lot at a cheap price impossible to other stores.

Moreover, the other stores can't imitate the transparent bags we're using that prevents water from seeping through. These bags along with the straws are products of the sticky slime's sticky liquid and hardening liquid. I combine those two liquids, rub them over a metal mold, dry them, and then tear them off. The resulting product is similar to a vinyl bag that's extremely easy to use. As the product isn't in circulation, it can't be helped that the other stores aren't able to acquire it.

Or rather, if they manage to get some, I'll have to investigate where they got them… Well, in any case, the crushed ice sold by our store is unusually cheap. Couple that with a place like this arena here were people are quick to spend, then you have a recipe for a killing.

Also, I'm digressing a bit, but the one who came up with this bag wasn't me, but the branch manager of a laundromat, Caulkins-san. Having gotten used to managerial work, Caulkins-san sent me a letter, saying he's started researching slimes again. I don't have any intention of interfering with my employees' private lives so long as they're able to do their work, so I just sent him back an approving reply.

Half a year after that, a letter came with several prototypes of a vinyl-like bag. I was really touched when I saw those bags… I forgot about vinyl bags already, so when I saw them, it felt so nostalgic. I knew immediately that the vinyl bags would be useful, so I gave Caulkins-san a special bonus that also served as research funds.

As for the straw it was necessary before selling crushed ice. I created it with the production method of the bags as reference. It was made in pretty much the same way save for the ratio of the sticky liquid and hardening liquid and the mold used.

While I was caught up in my recollection after seeing the crushed ice, Riera-san and Sebasu-san took out a paper bag filled with food and a vessel made out of thin bamboo strips.

“What sort of food do you want? There’s popcorn and fried corn.” [Riera]
“There’s also hotdogs and corndogs.” [Sebasu]

Looks like they bought a lot…

Incidentally, popcorn, hotdog, and corndogs were in this world since long ago. They were definitely introduced by the otherworlders before me.

“I wonder if we bought too much?” [Riera]
“Don’t worry, what’s important is that you’re able to eat your fill.” [Ryouma]
“Well that’s true.” [Elia]

The six each took their seats as they ate, and started to watch the matches. I took a corndog for myself too as I listened to the six’s report regarding the store.

“Right… I think the service was good. They also explained the products well.” [Elia]
“I don’t think there were any problems in particular, but if I were to be picky, then I guess they seemed to be busy?” [Michelle]
“That can’t be helped though. There was a huge crowd of customers other than us after all.” [Riera]
“No, thank you very much. It’ll serve me well as reference for making a decision in whether I should add more employees, or whether the employees have simply not gotten used to their job yet.” [Ryouma]

Moderate busyness due to the store flourishing and being lively is fine, but if they make a mistake due to their busyness, it’ll be problematic. Customers don’t like seeing clerks that are too busy and always in a hurry either. I’ll have to check up on them in the near future.

While I was talking with the others, a flourish of trumpets resounded, signaling that there were 30 seconds left before the start of the match. The surrounding spectators had already begun to cheer on the fighters.

“Start!” [Announcer]

Several warriors entered the arena from the two gates on opposing sides. From our right were 5 men (1 spearman, 3 swordsmen, and 1 man with sword and shield). Facing them from our left, was a lone man nearly 2-meter-tall, wielding a huge hammer. Wait a moment… isn’t that Glen-san?

It takes me back when I see him him change his weapon from what he had when we met a few days ago to something different. Still… he's making a killing anyway, so he should just go ahead and buy an adamantite weapon not just for fighting, but even for matches like these arena tournaments.

"Ryouma-dono, is this match a five on one?" [Riera]
"Seems to be the case." [Ryouma]
"Then is the man to the left at the disadvantage?" [Riera]
"No. That man to the left is Glen-san. He's an adventurer who just became S Rank last year, so he should be fine." [Ryouma]
"Really!?" [Riera]

Ohh, Riera's eyes turned sharp as soon as she heard he was an S Rank adventurer as if she wasn't going to let even a single movement of his go unobserved.

"He's the champion of a tournament that was held here before. Sometimes when a person like that comes out, he's made to fight against multiple opponents as a handicap. Otherwise, since Glen-san's so strong, it wouldn't be possible to bet… Ah, but of course, there's no match fixing going on here. Especially when Glen-san's fighting as I think he'd get mad if that were to happen." [Ryouma]

Glen-san is what you would call a battle junkie. He made Gimuru his home base as soon as the arena was completed. He lives here precisely so he can fight. He's not one to go easy on his opponents or put his hands in match fixing. Even if he were asked to, the only thing that would result in is souring his mood.

I've also met with Glen-san several times since he lives in Gimuru. When we did he would always ask, are you fighting in the arena? It seems he remembers my face from when we met at the Great Forest of Shurus before.

…Fortunately, he wasn't the type to forcefully make me come with him, or attack regardless of the location. Then again, a person like that probably wouldn't become S Rank. There's a background check before one is promoted to S Rank after all. You can't become one just with power alone, you also need to have a good history and personality.

As I was thinking that, we approached the start of the match. The constants

were gathered, and at the center stood a man dressed in white armor. The two groups braced themselves.

“Match, start!!” [Announcer]

At the voice’s call, the bell sounded, and the battle began.

“WoORa!!” [Glen]
“Ga!?” [Spearman]

Immediately, Glen-san rushed toward the spearman. With his hammer in his hands, he struck down, and crushed the spear. Then with a full swing, he sent the man flying.

I guess that he’ll be sent to the first-aid office then.

After that, the shield and sword wielding warrior stepped out, attracting Glen-san’s attention while the three others came from the side. Glen-san tried to destroy his opponent’s weapon with his hammer, but as he was aiming for a counter, he was able to dodge. The shield wielding man covered for him, allowing him to recover his stance, and there after attack once more. A close battle with neither side gaining an advantage continued.

That shield guy sure is holding it well. The other three guys are also strong. I don’t recognize any of them, but regardless how bad my eye is for skill, they should all at least be B Rank up… This match is certainly something worth seeing. After this, I should check the matchups later.

As I was thinking that the battle grew fiercer.

“Ah!” [Someone]

As the shield of the shield-wielding warrior was flicked away, someone cried out in surprise.

The warrior tried to pick up his shield, and fix his stance, but instead he was sent flying away together with his shield. He was forced to withdraw. Then with the remaining three warriors’ coordination broken, Glen-san took them down one by one to claim victory.

The referee declared Glen-san the winner, and the spectators all broke out into cheers as Glen-san waved back at them, exiting through the gate.

“As expected of an S Rank, he didn’t step back once.” [Kanan]
“What an amazing match. Do matches like this happen here all the time?” [Riera]
“Oh, no. I don’t think the normal matches here are up to that level.” [Ryouma]
“Although they lost, they were quite strong too.” [Sebasu]

The trumpets blew again, and the spectators’ cheers grew louder. Because of that I’m not sure whether the girls heard my and Sebasu-san’s explanation.

It’s not obvious, but Glen-san is a dwarf. The dwarves have an image of being a small race, but that’s only because most of them are short. There are actually tall dwarves as well.

Dwarves are handy with their hands and physically fit. They are a race blessed with a powerful body, but even within that, Glen-san is exceptionally strong. It’s only because the shield-wielding warrior from before was able to endure the force of that strength despite being bashed by the hammer several times while the others fought together as one that they were able to fight a battle like a while ago. If it was anyone else, they would surely have been instantly defeated.

The five girls already seemed to be looking forward to the next match, but if they’re expecting a match similar to just now, I hope they don’t get disappointed…

And then night came.

“The matches sure were exciting.” [Michelle]
“The matches were amazing, but the first one was definitely the best.” [Riera]
“Really? I think the three matches after that that used magic were better.” [Michelle]
“Those matches were really showy~. If it weren’t for the barrier magic protecting us, we wouldn’t have been able to watch the battle.” [Kanan]
“Speaking of showy――“ [Elia]

After watching at the heated arena, we rode back home on as the girls talked about their impressions. They seem to have really enjoyed themselves today.

Although I sure didn’t think they’d spend the entire day watching fights.

The five of them were girls after all, so I thought they’d get tired after a while. But apparently that wasn’t the case. Especially for Riera-san who was especially

heated during the matches. But the other four weren't bored either. I wonder if it's simply because they're bored?

Come to think of it, I've never heard of sports in this world… some board games from earth were passed down, so there's relatively a lot of them, but I've never heard of anything pertaining to sports. I'll try asking someone about it next time…

The carriage continued on its way as I quietly thought to myself. As the crowd of scantily-dressed women grew more numerous on the road, we left the gates of the 2nd town, and reached the gates of the 1st town. Our carriage was stopped here.

"Please show your identific—— Ah, old man!" [Guard]

I sent a gaze toward that nostalgic voice, and what greeted me was the face young guard with a familiar face. He's someone I personally taught. If I recall correctly, his name is…. Crais-san. Oh, so he was recently hired then.

I thought that as I rubbed the corner of my inner eye with the thumb and index finger of my left hand. Then as I abruptly stood up, I inched my way through Elia and the others who were seating to get to the driver's seat. There, I took a tight grip of Crais-san's head.

"Old man…?" [Crais]

As I held him tight under my arms, I said.

"Who are you calling an old man? I'm younger than you!" [Ryouma]

I'm 14 years old, he's 18 years old. The younger one is me! Of course if you include my previous life, then I'm an old man, but there's no way he would know something like that. Being called younger is one thing, but I don't want to be referred to as someone older.

"Ah, owwwwww!! Wait a sec, old man! I'm a guard! It's not good to manhandle guards!" [Crais]

Complained Crais has he endured the pain. But the other guards in the area only said.

"Ah, it's fine, it's fine." [Guard 1]

“That guy got married recently, so he’s been getting over his head. Do him in more!” [Guard 2]
“We see nothing.” [Guard 3]
“This kid always talks about his wife every chance he gets! Damnit!” [Guard 4]
“… Crush him!” [Guard 5]
“Senpai!? owwwwww!” [Crais]

The surrounding guards cheered me on, so I locked his head hard one more time then I let him go. We couldn’t stay locked like that forever after all.

“We want to enter the town, so please quickly grant us permission.” [Ryouma]
“Ah… it still hurts… Excuse me, I’ll just check your identification…. Alright, everyone seems to be ok. Please enter.” [Crais]
“Thank you very much.” [Elia]
“Thank you very much, Crais-san. Please continue to do your best.” [Ryouma]
“Of course! I’ll do it for my wife and my future child too!” [Crais]
“Ryouma, do him in again!” [Guard 1]
“Even using that giant slave demon of yours is fine.” [Guard 2]
“Nah, let’s just do it ourselves.” [Guard 3]
“Wait, senpai! Please stop!” [Crais]

As Crais-san was surrounded by the other guards, we entered the town with our carriage. I sent a glance back toward where Crais-san was, and what I saw was Crais-san’s two arms locked down by two guards as he received light body blows from another. Then while they were playing around another guard came. I guess it’s time for them to change shifts. In any case, I offered a silent prayer for Crais-san.

“Umm… Ryouma-san? What was about just now?” [Elia]
“That guard was my former student. For some reason he likes to call me old man though. Even though I’m the younger one…” [Ryouma]

Upon hearing that, not just Elia, but even Sebasu-san and Miyabi-san showed understanding expressions.

“…What is it?” [Ryouma]
“Ryouma-sama, you’ve always been mature mentally, so it probably can’t be helped.” [Sebasu]

“I remember I thought you were really composed too when I first met ya.” [Miyabi]
“Sometimes you even look at me with eyes like gramps and the others. Eyes that seemed like they were protecting me.” [Elia]

Following them, the other three also spoke.

“Ryouma-kun, you’re younger?” [Michelle]
“I do recall hearing you’re younger than us by a year, but I forgot all about it after talking with you.” [Riera]
“We might call you with ‘kun’, but your atmosphere’s definitely that of an older guy.” [Kanan]

Maybe it’s because I’ve been a kid for 6 years already that I find it strange they think of me like this… I don’t know anymore… Am I a kid or an old man? I know deep inside that I’m older than my exterior shows when I put my two lives’ ages together, but I still can’t help but insist, ‘I’m 14 years old!’, deep inside.

…Nothing would change even if we kept this up, so I just forcefully changed my feelings. I asked what Elia and her group will be doing tomorrow, and apparently, they want to go somewhere different. There, Riera-san mentioned that she wanted to have the match we talked about the day before yesterday. I guess she’s been influenced by the arena. Well I did promise her though, so why not?

After thinking for a while, I suggested to give them a tour of some of Gimuru’s training. There’s a training area there too, so we can use that to have the match. After that, I chatted idly with Elia’s group until we reached their lodging. After we parted, I went back home.

“I should make some preparations for tomorrow. And since we’re going to the Slime Den Restaurant tomorrow noon, I guess I should inform Celma-san in advance.” [Ryouma]

I stopped walking, and then I decided to go to the Slime Den Restaurant first then go home. My course decided, I began walking the night road again.

Chapter 7: Pick-up

TL Note: Rhinos -> Rhino.

The next day

After I finished my morning preparations, I went outside to the bamboo thickets, and prepared my monster carriage.

A monster carriage is just a carriage pulled by a magical beast, so the structure isn't really that different from a normal carriage. People wanting to buy one also needs to go to a workshop or a store that sells carriages, so there are people who just call them both carriage.

If I had to point out a difference, it would be the position of the coachman's seat. The magical beast's body is different from a horse, so it's necessary to position the seat with that in mind. As a result, there are quite a number of specially ordered goods for monster carriages. Unless of course, the body of the magical beast to be used is similar to a horse.

"I'll be relying on you today." [Ryouma]
"Kyuyon!" [Cannonball Rhino]

I said that as I tied Rai to the carriage. When I did, he responded with an unusually high-pitched voice.

Rai's no longer the same as when I met him 2 years ago. His body is now close to being 3 meters long, which is the average size for an adult cannonball rhino. So with that, I guess you could say he's an adult now. Along with that growth comes power. Nowadays, Rai's strong enough to pull a large carriage by himself easily, so whenever I use one, I usually let him pull it.

Moreover, the monster carriage I tied Rai to was closer to an oxcart in shape rather than a carriage. The frame of the carriage is a long rectangle with sticky slime hardening liquid planks inlayed onto the windows to prevent crimes.

There’s also the specially-ordered seat for the coachman that’s positioned a little higher than what it should be in order to take into consideration Rai’s future growth.

It’s possibly to put objects atop the frame, but even without doing that, the frame could already fit 8 adults inside excluding me. So there’s plenty of space even when I let the slimes ride on the carriage. Only, due to Rai’s overbearing strength, the stress placed on the frame and especially the wheels at full speed was too great. So in order to remedy that, I had the big iron slimes transform into wheels.

“Whoops, I guess I better go now.”

I shouldn’t be late for my appointment with Elia and the others.

I ordered Rai, and he entered into my Dimension Home. I plan on going to Gimuru with my dimension magic, but I won’t be able to take Rai and the carriage with me. Fortunately, I can take him along as long as I have him enter the Dimension Home first, and then release him once we get there.

I say… Dimension magic sure is convenient. Though I guess saying that might be a tad bit too late now considering everything.

“‘Gate'” [Ryouma]

When I used the advanced dimension magic, Gate…

“Made it in just the nick of time.” [Ryouma]

…the scenery immediately changed from that of the abandoned mine and the bamboo thickets to that where I was close enough to see the outer walls of Gimuru.

Relatively speaking, it’s just something recent, but I learned how to use ‘Gate’. It’s thanks to this magic that I’m able to greatly reduce the travel time between towns. Unfortunately though, with the speed comes the loss of enjoyment. There’s no elegance or atmosphere to it, so I only use it when I’m in a hurry. Otherwise, I’d rather take my time, and enjoy the travel with Rai pulling on the monster carriage.

“Just as the name implies, the advanced long distance magic, ‘Gate’, is able to

teleport one from outside the gate to the next town's gate. It seems to have been named exactly because of that ability. Anyway… 'Dimension Home'" [Ryouma]

With a cast of my Dimension Home, I took Rai and the monster carriage out. Then I sat myself over the coachman's seat, and took hold of the bridle as I drove the monster carriage. By the way, the bridle is just for show. Rai is my magical beast, so I can just order him to pull it with the bond between us that's formed via magic. There's no need to actually hold the bridle.

Five minutes later as Rai pulled on the monster carriage, we arrived at the northern gate of Gimuru.

"Good morning." [Ryouma]
"Hey, good morning. Big as always, huh? This guy." [Guard]
"Kwon!" [Rai]
"Oh, good morning to you too, huh?" [Guard]
"I've finished confirming your identification. You can go now. And if it's you, I think you'll be fine, but do take care in handling your magical beast." [Guard]
"Alright. Thanks as always." [Ryouma]

I passed through the gates, and then I headed to the girls' lodging.

Riding on the monster carriage, I entered Gimuru. As we passed by, people who recognized Rai waved their hands, and the children ran along with us. There were also people who were surprised, but they were all either people who didn't live in Gimuru or people who had only recently moved here.

There was a time when the people were scared due to the idiots over at the tamer guild, but after earning the trust of the people, I now often come here with Rai. Besides, the people like to touch him, and the kids like him too.

He's big, he's strong, he's gentle… and the fur over his body is pretty too. He's actually great to look at.

"Even though I thought he was brownish when we first met…" [Ryouma]
"Kwon!" [Rai]

I didn't notice it back when we were at the Great Forest of Shurus, but his fur is actually colored gray, close to white. I only found out after he became my

magical beast, and I had the cleaner slimes give him a shower. I was really shocked when the color of his fur vanished in the blink of an eye right in front of me…

I investigated the matter a bit later, and apparently, the base color for a cannonball rhino is gray. It does change a little depending on each cannonball rhino. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to get any information on what other colors there were. I do want to research the matter a bit more, but even if I tried to clean the other rhinos with my cleaner slimes, they'd just run away… But then again, Rai has grown up… Should I find him a mate? Once I do, I could use that as an opportunity to research.

In any case, I'll deal with that later…

As I approached the lodging, I noticed that Elia and the others were already outside, waiting.

Oh? Was I late?

"Good morning. Sorry for making you all wait." [Ryouma]
"Good morning, Ryouma-san. You're actually earlier than the appointed time." [Elia]
"Yesterday, I heard you were going to prepare a monster carriage. I was so excited wondering what magical beast you would take with you." [Michelle]
"This kid's so big… What kind of magical beast is this?" [Kanan]
"His name is Rai. He's a cannonball rhino. A B Rank magical beast. Not only is he a huge help with that carriage, but he's also a great deterrent to other magical beasts attacking, making travel a breeze." [Ryouma]

Because of that though, he's unfit for subjugating bandits. Since they'd just run away as soon as they saw him. For example, the bandits that aren't a part of the dark guild that haven't heard of the rumors about me – who, in other words, are 'unlicensed bandits' ¬– would just generally run upon seeing Rai.

"That's that, but isn't it hot waiting outside?" [Ryouma]
"Not at all. It's still early morning, so the weather's still fresh. The morning wind also feels good, so there're waiting outside's no problem." [Riera]
"So she says, but deep inside, she's actually just dying ta have her match with you." [Miyabi]

So that’s why they were waiting outside.

“M-Miyabi…” [Riera]
“Ain’t it fine? I don’t think there’s anything ta be embarrassed about considering it’s Ryouma we’re talking about.” [Miyabi]
“He’s on a different league compared to our classmates at the academy.” [Kanan]
“Well that’s true…” [Riera]

Her face is a bit red… I wonder if she’s nervous or embarrassed because she got found out. In any case, I should help her relax. I planned for the match to be held in the afternoon from the start anyway, so…

“We’ll just keep talking and standing outside here at this rate, so everyone, please enter inside.” [Ryouma]

As I stepped down the coachman’s seat, I opened the door of the carriage attached at the side of the carriage’s frame. But before letting them enter, I placed a wooden foothold to make it easier for the girls to enter. Elia and the others thanked me as they each entered the carriage.

After everyone had gotten inside, I sat myself back up over the coachman’s seat. There’s a door just big enough for one person to reach the coachman’s seat. Opening that door, I called out to Elia and the others.

“If there’s nothing else, we’ll be departing. Are you all ready?” [Ryouma]

When I asked that, they answered back that they were ready. Since everything was good to go, I gave Rai the order, and the carriage began to move. The people of this town are alright, but there’re a lot of outsiders in the lodging, so it’ll be best for us to leave quickly. Rai is a strange sight after all, so there’re a lot of people who can’t help but want to take a look at him. There’s also no point in staying, so leaving quickly is best.

“Please feel free to speak out if the temperature’s too hot or cold! I can adjust it for you!” [Ryouma]

I said in a voice just loud enough for them to hear as I continued facing the road’s direction. But the response that came back from the girls was not an answer, but a question.

“Change?” [Kanan]

Ah… I’ve been using the monster carriage like a car from my previous life, so I’ve forgotten. But now that she mentions it, yeah… ACs aren’t normal here in this world, huh?

“There’re three slimes in the carriage, right?” [Ryouma]
“Yeah.” [Kanan]
“Those three slimes are cooler slime, heater slime, and aircon slime. Those slimes can each use wind and ice, wind and fire, and then wind, fire, and ice, magic respectively. If you want me to, I can order those slimes to blow cold air or hot air inside the carriage to control the temperature. Please feel free to say it if you need the temperature changed.” [Ryouma]

The girls weren’t surprised at all when I gave that explanation, rather they just calmly accepted it.

“By the way, Ryouma-han. Where are we going right now? Yesterday, you did mention that we would be going several places today.” [Miyabi]
“First off is the lodging for the training and the trainees. It’s close to the residential district, northeast of Gimuru. That place used to be the slums three years ago, but all that changed thanks to the increase in jobs.” [Ryouma]

Most of the town personnel were split between the two towns, so I was put in charge of dealing with the demolished slum. The training facility is one of the things I constructed there. There are also a lot of trainee that lived in the slums before.

As I laughed while saying that, the others said they were interested. Especially, Michelle-san who was staring quite strongly… Well, as long as they’re enjoying themselves, then that’s all that really matters.

“By the way, why did you start that training facility of yours?” [Michelle]
“Hmm… Well if there was to be a reason, then I guess it would be because I was uncomfortable.” [Ryouma]

Michelle-san could only tilt her head in puzzlement when she heard my words. Can’t be helped… it’s only natural after all that she wouldn’t understand much with just that explanation..

“I started the training facility about 2 years ago. Until then I was always away from Gimuru. But during that time, the construction of the second town began, and the adventurers and slave demon magic users coming from outside also increased. Even if I were to say it myself, the reason behind what happened then was probably because I was strong…” [Ryouma]
“Were you envied by adventurers your age?” [Riera]
“Exactly.” [Ryouma]

That time sure was rough… I was really sensitive to petty envy due to the demon king’s fragment. It was such that I could feel even the tiny envy from adventurers I was close with whenever we talked.

“Then why did you start the training facility because of that?” [Kanan]

At first, I did consider just cooping myself up inside the mine. But then, it hit me. While I may have been bothered by the ill will people held against me, at the same time, although vague, I was able to understand what it was that was causing that ill will.

When I realized that, I thought to try something.

“So I thought I could solve the issues as long as I made the reason behind their malice go away. And since people were envious of me because of my strength, I figured I should just train them until they were strong enough they didn’t need to be envious. As for those who were envious of my money, then I decided I should just introduce them to a good job, so they could earn money.” [Ryouma]

I wasn’t sensitive to subtle things like that back in my previous life. Thanks to the demon king’s fragment though, I was able to sense it. It might only be limited to negative emotions, but it’s no doubt that it’s thanks to it that I was able to understand the emotions those people held.

My actions were done on a whim, but the result was mostly a success. I trained people whenever I went out to buy food ingredients, and over time, the eyes that the troubling people looked at me with changed for the better.

Of course, there were also times when they needlessly refused. But at that point, there’s nothing else to do, but to just ignore those types of people. That’s a compromise I decided on since before, so I wasn’t really bothered much.

There were failures too. Some of the people who were envious became scared instead. I did hold back though. I wonder if they were beginners. People thought I was bullying people, so the guild master, Wogan, paid a visit. I explained everything to him except for the demon king's fragment, and he decided to help out as well.

I think it was around that time that aspiring newcomers would sign up on their own. It was due to that that the scale of the facility also grew bigger…

After continuing that for some time, I eventually learned the Coach skill. Moreover, even though the fragment of the demon king's almost been finished being treated, I'm a lot more sensitive to people's feelings now… Or at least I think so anyway. At the very least, my acquaintances have increased. I know way more people now than I ever did back in my previous life. I'm really happy about that. I also have a bit of influence in Gimuru nowadays too. No one's coming to sabotage my stores like that time when I first opened my store either. Everything's going real well.

Now going back to the main topic…

I explained the story to Elia and the others as the carriage swayed. Of course, I made sure to leave out the demon king's fragment. As I finished explaining, a white wall about 2 meters tall and a gate surrounding a two-story building entered my vision.

You can't see the whole thing from here, but the buildings are arranged like the katakanas 'コ' (ko) and '口' (ro) from the entrance of the building. Overall, the place looks like a mansion save for some parts. The whole place is shaped like a rectangle with the dimension 50m x 100m, and an area of 5000 square meters.

"You can see it now." [Ryouma]

When I said that, Elia and the others took a peek from the door behind me.

"So that's Ryouma-kun's training facility?" [Kanan]
"It's well made." [Michelle]
"To think it would be this big." [Riera]
"I talked with the duke before making this, so I got a lot of help." [Ryouma]
"Ryouma-sama's efforts have greatly improved the public order of Gimuru. The household of the duke also managed to gain some hidden gems amongst the

accomplished people trained by the facility. The master also plans to continue providing assistance depending on the success from here on. Moreover, the Jamil Household is also investigating whether to make similar buildings like this one in the different town. It's not so strange at all that the duke would support Ryouma-sama's idea." [Sebasu]

Come to think of it, weren't there people leaving to work for the duke recently? I can't remember their names, but they should be doing well… right? It's great that they were able to find a good place to work at.

Chapter 8: A Visit to the Training Facility

After passing through the gates, I returned Rai and the monster carriage back into the Dimension Home, then I began the tour.

We've just gone past through the gates of the facility. The place was quiet, and there were no people around. The only things that could be seen were the seemingly well-built buildings with flower beds and trees around and the open plaza. But despite the seeming lack of life, the sound and voices of people could be heard.

"Currently, the orphans of and around Gimuru, the teachers, the employees working at my store, and the slaves are all living here. There are 300 of them all in all. Aside from those living here, there are also those who have their own house or stay at the inn at the town who commute to this training facility." [Ryouma]

When I said that, Elia and the others looked at me with deep interest.

"As I've said before, I originally started this facility on my own whims, but it was thanks to the support of the Jamil household and the many people who helped me that we were able to put up this facility." [Ryouma]

Financial aid was one of the ways I received help, but other than that I also received help in the form of people offering their services. Most of the instructors in this facility are actually people who retired from their jobs under the condition that I would provide for their day-to-day needs. They said they didn't need much of a salary so long as I could ensure their livelihood.

This facility is an orphanage for children unable to support themselves, a dormitory for the employees working for me, a school for children and other aspiring people who wishes to learn techniques, as well as a workshop for the craftsmen taught by the facility.

As I said that, the first place I led the group to were the rooms of the people

living in the facility. The left and right buildings that were lined up like the katakana 'コ' from the gate were the residences. And the center building of that shape was the shared space which contained the bath and the dining hall. I showed Elia's group the rooms that were currently empty.

The rooms were fit for four, furnished only with the barest of necessities. But should any other furniture be needed, we can also provide those. But in any case, the rooms were dreary with nothing else to them but their sturdiness. Yet surprisingly, Michelle-san actually liked the room, and thought it to be comfortable.

After that came the bath and the washroom. There was a large bath for each of the residences to the left and right, totaling to 2. At first, it was suggested to only have one large bath, separating the people entering by time. But then considering that many of the adventurers and artisan trainees would come home dirty, in the end, it was decided for there to be two large baths to allow either gender to enter whenever they wish.

All the dirty water and trash goes to the basement where the scavenger slimes dispose of them. After which, the scavenger slimes then spit fertilizers into another room in the basement.

Next came the lounge and the dining hall. The lounge and the dining hall were created to accommodate a huge crowd, but due to the furniture being created by the students of the craftsmen, the furniture decorating the area were all over the place in terms of quality.

As for the kitchen, the one using it weren't only the cooks, but also the students learning to cook. They used it for their hands-on training as well as a place to make bread crumbs. It's no exaggeration to say that it's thanks to the students and the husband and wife instructors who were former bakers that I'm able to serve the fried foods – except for the tempura – in my Slime Den Restaurant or the store in the arena.

Food like croquette, tonkatsu, and menchi-katsu were certainly popular, but leaving even the production of the bread crumbs to the employees was just too much of a burden. But thanks to the help of the students and the teachers, not only is it possible for the employees to skip the bread crumb making stage, but as

the two bakers had even researched on the frying of the breadcrumbs, the taste was even improved. The skills of a pro are truly frightening.

This concludes most of the tour. Now… let's go to the main course, and head to the learning area!

But just as I was about to head there, I noticed that Elia and the others were for some reason looking at the ceiling and the walls strangely.

"Magic stones for lighting the rooms, and candles for the hallway…" [Riera]
"Is there something that caught your attention?" [Ryouma]

As I responded to Riera-san's muttering, Riera-san hesitatingly said.

"Yes, actually… Is this facility doing fine in regards to its operation costs?" [Riera]

Operation costs? Well, there's no problem in particular… Did it look like we were having financial problems?

As I was being puzzled by Riera-san's unexpected question, Michelle-san added.

"The candles on the hallway walls are consumables, right? Moreover, there're also the magic stones inside the rooms. Isn't it expensive having so many magic tools set in so many different rooms? Orphanages and baths normally don't have them. I mean they're great to look at sure, but isn't it too costly?" [Michelle]

Ah, so that's what it was! It wasn't the walls, but the candles that she was looking at!

Of course, using lighting would definitely cost money. And the bigger the facility, the greater the expenses. That's why the church and the orphanage gets everyone to sleep early. It's common sense after all to save up on candles.

But this training facility doesn't do that. If you ask why, well it's because three amongst the teachers here are tallow chandlers. Moreover, there are ten students here learning how to make candles, resulting in hundreds of candles being made every day. So there's no need to bother about candle consumption.

The teachers check the candles made, and when they're good enough, they get sent to Serge-san's Morgan Firm to be sold. So rather than being a burden to

the operation costs of the facility, the candles are instead a source of profit.

Moreover, the students are also passionate about their studies. So there are many of them who continue to study even during the night. If they just wanted to play around, then I probably wouldn't support them, but since they want to study, well… I mean if I didn't support them, then there wouldn't be any point to this facility, right?

So I firmly answered.

"There's no problem at all. The magic stones will break after using them long enough, but we're more than able to take care of the expenses. Besides, it's a necessary expense to let the children study." [Ryouma]

When they heard my response, they clapped and praised in admiration. They each looked at me with admiring gazes.

"Ryouma-san, I'm moved!" [Elia]

As Elia said that, she took my hands, surprising me. Then Michelle-san said.

"The Imperial Capital's Academy provides magic tools and candles in order to reduce the costs of lighting in the night. From time to time, we see some poor students without any lighting." [Michelle]
"Really?" [Ryouma]

I didn't know.

That aside is Elia going to keep holding…

Just as I thought that, it seems Elia noticed too, and she pulled back her hand as she took a step back. Thinking back on the Elia from before, this Elia's reaction is a lot more womanlike….

Michelle-san continued.

"Yeah, so what they do is they cut their time spent during the night, save up money, and then buy some lighting for themselves. The fact that you consider it a necessary expense to provide lighting for your students really helps them a lot. Your students are fortunate, and I'm sure they can feel your passion as well." [Michelle]

It sure feels uneasy being praised this much. Michelle-san's a bit androgynous,

but she's still really pretty. The other four girls are also all young, beautiful women, so it can't be helped if I end up blushing after being praised like that.

"Ah, no… It just doesn't cost that much for me, so you don't have to praise me that much." [Ryouma]

I pulled myself together… I planned on taking them to the learning area anyway, so I might as well take them to the candle workshop first. As I thought that, I walked.

With the girls in tow, I left the shared area, and walked down deep into the halls until we reached a fork. Ahead is the learning space.

I turn right, and walk past the classroom of the students studying letters and calculations. I climbed up the stairs at the end, and then opened the door to the corner room that was the first to greet us upon entering the second floor.

The room we entered was two sizes bigger than the classroom we just passed by a while ago. In there were three skilled tallow chandlers. They were Dort-san, Delt-san, and Tord-san. With them were 10 male students, working. After they greeted me, and I told them that I was doing a tour of the facility for Elia's group, they immediately went back to working.

Amongst the 10 students that were working, two were twining a wooden rod in washi (Japanese Paper), grass, and cotton. Two were melting and filtering wax inside a pot. Of which the resulting wax were then being processed by another two who created wicks through the use of the rod from before. Then the remaining four used their bare hands to smear wax over a rod until it was thick. As for the three skilled tallow chandlers, they would go around supervising the students by giving them advice or by showing them how it's done.

I feel like the students started working harder when I entered the room, but I'll just keep quiet about that.

"These are the skilled tallow chandlers and the people learning from them." [Ryouma]

When I said that, the girls' gazes moved to the box near the students, by the corner of the room, filled with candles.

"This facility first teaches characters and the basics of arithmetic calculations.

After that, it teaches the students what they want to learn.” [Ryouma]

The students are cut out for different things, so while I won’t chase them out if they have no talent, being unmotivated is another story.

“So… about the matter of lighting we were discussing a while ago, the candles being used in this facility are all being made here. We also make a profit from the candles produced here, so there’s not much of a burden to our operation costs in providing all that lighting.” [Ryouma]

I might as well take this opportunity and introduce them…

I went to a corner of the room, and showed them a slime that was inside a barrel.

“This slime is a wax slime. It’s a slime that spits out wax.” [Ryouma]

The wax slime prefers to eat vegetation with plenty of oil content in them, but it can also eat other food just fine. The only side effect to doing so is that the wax it spits out will be less. Thanks to this slime the only real expense in candle making are the grasses and cotton used in the production of the candles’ wick.

The rods used are shaved bamboos made from the bamboo thickets by my house. The washi papers are created by the evolution of a sticky slime after eating bamboos, the pulp slime.

The pulp slime likes to eat strong vegetation with plenty of fiber. It then spits out the sticky liquid resulting from melted vegetation. It was by wringing out the faint memory I had of one of my extracurricular lessons back in my previous life, that I was able to make paper. It was hard making it from memory, but it was worth it.

The produced paper is used by the students as notebooks, textbooks, and test papers. It is also used to create paper bags to be used by the store at the arena. Papers are sold for 10 suits a sheet on the market, so just 10 sheets would already cost an adult a day’s living expense. With the pulp slime, a good chunk of the expense can be cut off. Unlike the candles, the paper made here is only used in my training facility, in my house, and in the store. It isn’t being sold.

“We don’t just provide candles to the students. We also provide them with notebooks and the necessary writing materials. Character and math textbooks

are also distributed free of charge to the students. And in the instance they run out of papers, they can request for a new one. Of course, they'll be scolded if the waste it." [Ryouma]

From candles to the ingredients of candles, and then to the explanation of the pulp slime. By the time I finished explaining everything, Elia and her friends' eyes had turned into dots.

"…" [Elia and her friends]

Huh? It's not like I mentioned anything about my previous life… And it's not like they were surprised by the cooler slimes back in the monster carriage, so why? Even Sebasu-san's just nodding his head while saying it can't be helped.

"Ryouma-kun, the textbooks are free? But shouldn't those be expensive since you need to pay for the ink and pay someone to engrave a mold?" [Michelle]
"Oh there's no problem there either as we have ink slimes." [Ryouma]

The ink slime eats vegetation and spits out liquids of different colors. Currently, they can spit out six different colors, which are black, white, red, blue, yellow, and green. But that's not all, by using ink with finely powdered magic stones, and writing a script. Then by placing a sheet of paper over that script, and letting the ink slimes spit out ink according to the shape of the script, it's possible to easily reproduce copies of the original script.

If you release magic power, the slimes will happily gather, and absorb magic power. This method of copying takes advantage of the slimes' ability to sense magic, and is useful for creating documents for reports and meetings. This is something that was mostly created by the slime research facility put up by me – as part of my hobbies – and by my fellow researchers.

Upon explaining that, Elia and her friends broke out in a chatter about how convenient slimes were.

I wholly agree with them. The fact that slimes are useful is a shared common sense in my circle.

More than anything though, I'm happy that they realize just how useful slimes are.

"If you'd like, I could provide some notebooks and papers for you all."

[Ryouma]

I spontaneously said that out loud. Actually, I don't think notebooks and papers would be a good present for girls, but Michelle-san was actually elated. Apparently, she often runs out of paper due to all of her magic formation experiments. She also had to record the results down too.

After that, I showed them the other places.

First was the workshop in the second story that created light things such as strainers, baskets, chairs, ornaments, clothes, and leather goods. Then I brought them to the classroom where lecture regarding the prices of commodities and the circulation of goods in the market were held. After which came the classroom for medicinal products and the laboratory. The doctor teaching that class is also responsible for aiding students that have fallen sick.

Following that, the rooms in the first floor were mostly just classrooms, workshops that produced heavy objects, the ingredients for those objects, and the warehouse where the furnishings of the facility were stored.

To give some examples of the workshops there, there's the workplace of the carpenters that build cabinets and desks, the sawmill where lumber is produced, and the harness/carriage workshop that had a large door facing toward the courtyard. It's actually from that workshop that I got Rai's monster carriage made.

We also visited many of the other classes. By the time we finished, it was noon. With the tour done, we rode on Rai's monster carriage, and left the facility.

On the way to the Slime Den Restaurant to have our lunch, I heard the girls talking from the seats behind me.

"Isn't it possible for the training facility here to actually be better than the Imperial Capital's Academy?" [Riera]
"Yeah… Smithing and magic's also taught in different places, right?" [Kanan]
"Yes, that is correct." [Sebasu]

There are a lot of people who want to become adventurers, and there's the risk of accidents if we had magic training take place in the same area, so adventure related classes and armor and weapon crafting classes are being held

elsewhere.

“The subjects being taught are less than the academy’s, but that’s only because the scale is different… And considering that the graduates have to become an apprentice somewhere, it’s not that much different I feel.” [Riera]
“I think it’s better here since I can get all the lighting and paper I need.” [Michelle]
“Well depending on what a person is looking for, the training facility here might actually be better than the academy. I think most people would prefer it here though.” [Elia]

Seeing the five praise the training facility that much made me happy. I had great confidence in it which is why I showed it to them, but who would’ve thought it would be put on the same level as the Imperial Capital’s Academy.

After that, I focused on driving the carriage. It wasn’t until we got to the Slime Den Restaurant that I realized that I’ve been humming all along.

Looks like I was a lot happier than I gave myself credit for.

Chapter 9: Slime Den Restaurant

While the girls were exiting the carriage, I looked at the Slime Den Restaurant.

The Slime Den Restaurant is a three-storied building. It's built with stones made from the red soil of the abandoned mine, giving it the warm atmosphere of a building made out of bricks. Its built on the land that was left over from when I built the laundromat, Bamboo Forest, and the land of the nearby building that was sold due to the store there moving to the new town. Because of that, the laundromat and the Slime Den Restaurant ended up having the employee dormitory right in between the two.

The manager of the Slime Den Restaurant is the same employee who took care of the kitchen of the laundromat, Celma-san. Karm-san said that there were plenty of vacant rooms in the dorm, so considering that Celma-san also had some lingering affections for her previous job, I talked to her about it.

We'll be able to fill the vacant rooms by having the employees of the Slime Den Restaurant sleep at the laundromat's dorm, and the employees will also be able to come and go easily to eat. Moreover, if I were to teach Celma-san the cooking in my previous life, I'll be able to eat food from my previous life whenever I please. It was for these reasons that I made the restaurant. With all that said, the Slime Den Restaurant is actually a store I started without any intention of making a profit. I was satisfied so long as it stayed clear of the red.

But by teaching Celma-san the recipe of my previous life's cuisines, and by giving her the pepper I harvested when I sometimes went out to gather herbal ingredients from the Great Forest of Shurus, and on top of that, by giving her the meat of the magical beasts I hunted along the way… Before I knew it, the store had already gotten famous for delicious cuisine.

After everyone had gotten off the carriage, I returned Rai into the Dimension

Home. I took Elia and her friends into the store. As we opened the door, a bell sounded, and the hustle and bustle within the store and the bright voice of the employees reached our ears.

“Welcome. This way please, owner.” [Waitress]

When we entered the store, a waitress and a slime that was on a small table a short distance away from the door, welcomed us. The drunk slime is the mascot of this store. Thanks to the divine protection it has received, it’s able to provide good alcohol to the store. It’s what you would call a “beckoning slime”.

“Thank you very much.” [Ryouma]

We followed the waitress through the crowded restaurant. The seats and tables were arranged in an orderly fashion. And although the restaurant was crowded, the spaces in between the tables that were also there to divide the area ensured that there was space to walk. The interior of the restaurant was designed like that of a family restaurant. People often say it’s a bit eccentric.

As we walked, following the waitress, we were led to a table by the corner in the second floor. As everyone took their seats, the waitress distributed the menu, and gave us some water to drink. Then she left us and went to the other tables where other customers calling her sat.

“Now what should we eat?” [Ryouma]

I forgot to ask what kind of food they were bad at, so I wasn’t able to plan anything beforehand except for desserts.

I drank my glass of water as I looked at the menu.

Speaking of which, this menu was made by printing the contents with the ink of the ink slime on the paper of the pulp slime. After which it was then enclosed in the hardening liquid plank of the sticky slime. At which point, a hole was then opened to allow the menu to be seen, and was then inserted into a leather bag, folded three times. After being folded three times, the name of the store and the word ‘menu’ can be seen on the front cover of the leather.

I scanned the menu a little, but I already have everything in it memorized; everything except the set meals that change daily depending on Celma-san’s whims and the food stocks. So there’s no point looking at the menu. With that in

mind, I might as well just explain the dishes myself.

“Is there anything you guys want to eat? Meat or vegetable…?” [Ryouma]

“Nothing in particular. I don’t really have any hates or dislikes when it comes to food, so I’ll take whatever you recommend, Ryouma-kun.” [Michelle]

Recommend, huh? Well I like everything in the menu, so if you were to ask me, I would actually recommend most of the food in it… If I were to consider the store’s profits, then I would have to recommend liquor, but… that’s not really an option here.

Also, I’m going to digress a bit, but the reason this store’s liquor is making such a profit is because of the world’s number one adviser (The God of Wine, Tekun).

Each time there was a banquet, I would bring food and wine to the divine realm, and Tekun would go, “This food goes with this wine!”. Because of that, I was able to get a good reference for which food to match with which liquor, resulting in the store making a killing.

Not that it’s related to the matter at hand or anything. Anyway, since it’s like this…

“How about the Slime Den Restaurant’s special made Hamburger Set? With seasoned minced meat, chicken soup, red wine, and herb sauce, it’s a treat you’ll never forget. There’re also bread and corn soup to go with it too.” [Ryouma]

There’s hamburger in this world so it should be safe, although the taste is completely different.

“Then I’ll have just that.” [Michelle]

Michelle’s decided, so next is… Kanan?

“I’d like some meat too. If possible I want to eat something I can’t eat anywhere else except for here.” [Kanan]

“Then in that case, I’d recommend either teriyaki pork, fried chicken, or beef cutlet set. The teriyaki pork and the fried chicken comes with rice, but the beef cutlet comes with bread.” [Ryouma]

“Then I’ll have that fried chicken set.” [Kanan]

“So there’s cooked rice here. I got ta say it’s been awhile since I’ve had some rice…” [Miyabi]

The staple food of this country is bread, so rice isn’t grown in these parts. This store is able to sell rice thanks to Pioro-san providing us imports along with soy sauce and miso from the dragonewt village. I wonder if there’re stores that sell cooked rice in the capital. I don’t think it’d be strange for the capital city of this country to have some, but the way Miyabi-san talks suggest otherwise…

As I pushed up all the rice dishes in my head up the list, Sebasu-san suggested a dish ahead of me.

“Then in that case, how about Chahan? It’s steamed rice, fried, with a taste seasoned with salt and pepper. If you were to make it into a set meal, then there’s chicken soup to go with it along with crispy minced meat and fried gyoza.” [Sebasu]

Because of that explanation, Miyabi-san, Elia, and Sebasu-san ordered the Chahan Set.

Come to think of it, Sebasu-san sure likes Chinese cuisine… It seems he’s been coming here to eat Chahan when I wasn’t around. The butler who orders Chahan every time he comes here is apparently famous amongst the employees.

Last to order was Riera-san, who ordered a lasagna set that had bread and soup to go with it.

I called the waitress, and ordered. Speaking of which, my order was the special made Hayashi Rice with sesame dressing salad.

Now all that’s left is to wait… While we were waiting, Elia noticed Miyabi-san looking around the store with serious eyes.

“Miyabi, is there something the matter?” [Elia]

“It’s related to my family’s business, so it caught my interest a bit.” [Miyabi]

Apparently, Miyabi-san saw the prices from the menu a while ago, and thought them to be rather cheap considering the import costs and the seasonings. While it’s true that importing a lot of goods while making it cheap isn’t easy, it’s thanks

to the effort of the company that it's possible.

"I go to the Great Forest of Shurus several times in a year to gather herbal ingredients. So during that time I would take the opportunity, and also harvest some pepper to use in the store." [Ryouma]

The pepper I get doesn't only grow around the vicinity of the ruins of Cormi Village, but also near the deeper areas of the forest. People don't enter that area, so there're plenty growing. I can get as much as I want, so during that time, I would stay for as long as a week, and gather enough to have even some left overs for the store.

The pepper I gather isn't only used in the store. I also use it to settle a part of the bill of the rice, soy sauce, and miso that I get from the Saionji Firm. In other words, I also use it to barter.

"Other than that, I also provide the magical beasts I hunt along with the vegetables grown in my house, so I'm able to reduce the cost." [Ryouma]

It's not only bamboos that grow in my house. I need food to raise the goblins that I use to feed the slimes and experiment on, so I turned a part of the abandoned mine mountain into a field.

"So Ryouma-dono does even that." [Riera]

"Yes, but the guild master of the merchant guild warned me not to sell those as it would cause the prices of all sort of things to fall, so while they're being used, they aren't being sold." [Ryouma]

It's common for magicians specializing in wood magic to make a small change with agriculture. It's not strange either for retired magicians to work at fields. But in my case, I'm using the scavenger slimes' fertilizer and the plant slimes that use wood magic to farm in large scale, resulting in scale and yields of a completely different league.

When I first started, there were many times when the crops turned into magical beasts, and were spoiled. But nowadays, I'm able to regularly supply this store with a variety of crops. Also, it's not just crops that I'm not allowed to sell. I was also warned to talk before selling any of the notebooks and papers made by the training facility.

“Today’s really changed my perspective on slimes… It’s really a mystery why researchers gave slimes the cold shoulder for so long.” [Michelle]

When she heard my words, Michelle-san said that.

“There are plenty of people who came under my wing, and produced results, you know? The wax slimes and the ink slimes in the training facility that I showed you are some of the results of those researchers who came under my wing… The slimes were ignored, so the researchers couldn’t provide results. And because they couldn’t provide results, the researchers ignored the slimes even more. It’s a vicious cycle.” [Ryouma]

I gathered the slime researchers from Caulkins-san and his friends’ former workplace to work for me in my laundromats. It was then that I found out that there were actually plenty of researchers who were willing to research slimes, but due to malnutrition from poverty, their health deteriorated.

Many amongst them tried to stave off their hunger with Kofu berry. It’s a kind of berry with texture similar to that of mochi, but bitter. But then even if they do manage to stave off their hunger, they wouldn’t get much nutrients.

It seems they tried to compensate for the lack of nutrients with the Hamide herb – a kind of herb with plenty of nutrients – but even then it wasn’t enough. Continuing a lifestyle like that for an extended period would only leave them suffering with malnutrition or… sick. It’s not a lifestyle you could call healthy.

When I asked them why they kept eating those things, they said it’s because they didn’t have money. So even though the food was bad, since they were able to buy those two cheap, allowing them to buy lots, they kept eating it.

Being in a state like that wouldn’t just leave you unmotivated, it would even take away your ability to think. If anything, they already did plenty well in that they didn’t collapse.

“What happened to those people?” [Riera]

“Making them work like that would have been bad for my conscience… and besides, I wasn’t even confident they’d be able to work, so I first helped rehabilitate them. Nowadays, everyone is back to health, and they’re either working at a branch store of my laundromat, or researching at the research

facility at the back of the training facility.” [Ryouma]

By making full use of my knowledge in medicine, both in this world and the last, along with the help of actual doctors, after we were able to confirm that the researchers were in fact suffering from malnutrition, we crushed some soybeans and fruits, and threw them into water. Then from that solution of vitamin B1, B2, B12, and C, I used my alchemy to draw out and mix vitamin pills, which we then had the destitute researchers drink.

From my identify skill, I found out that there were in fact little nutrients in the kofu berry. At the same time, I also found out that there were plenty of nutrients in the hamide herb, however, it was lacking in Vitamin B.

It’s harmful to the body to take too much of a certain vitamin, so I made sure to only give them water soluble vitamins which are relatively easier to expulse from the body. The medicines are only something made in a jiffy, but since administering it to them, their health gradually got better.

I had already reached the age where I was worried about my health back in my previous life, so I would often check various sites on health related matters then… it seems that knowledge actually proved itself useful here.

They had some other diseases on top of the malnutrition, so they weren’t able to make an instant recovery. But despite that, after making them stop eating such unhealthy meals, and making them take the vitamin pills and eat food easy to digest, and then letting them rest, even the doctors were surprised at how fast they recovered.

There are still some of them drinking vitamin pills even today, but that’s only for supplement, and not treatment. Nowadays, they rarely have any health issues aside from lack of sleep.

Back to the topic.

When I told them that the destitute researchers had gotten better, Elia and the others smiled as they said, “that’s great.”

“Excuse me.” [Waitress]

Oh, the food came. We were concentrated on talking, so it felt like the food came instantly.

As the three waitresses called out to us, they began to place the food on the table. When they finished, they politely bowed, went to a corner, opposite our table, and returned to the waiting area by the special staircase in the second floor that's meant for carrying food.

When the eating began, the once lively table turned quiet. Everyone had become too entranced by the food, leaving little words to be said. Especially Miyabi-san, who was completely focused on eating, not even speaking a single word.

Still… I have to say… it's sort of strange seeing a butler and a lady like Elia eating Chahan and Gyoza. Then again that's probably just because I haven't eaten anything back then aside from home cooking or cheap food.

It's not really strange even for high-class Chinese restaurants to serve Chahan. Although I wouldn't really know whether a high-class Chinese restaurant would also serve fried gyoza. If you asked for gyoza at an authentic restaurant, they would probably serve boiled gyoza instead since apparently, fried gyoza is a way to sell leftover food.

But the people of this world don't know that. All they know is that it's delicious, and are just eating normally. The only one who finds it strange is me due to the image I have in my mind.

After eating, the peach-like jello that I had reserved beforehand was brought. After eating that too, our lunch concluded. I paid the bill, and we rode the monster carriage. Hearing that everyone was satisfied made me happy.

I already knew that they enjoyed the meal from the expression they had while eating though… Ah, but I won't teach the recipe to anyone, ok?

As I responded to the voices of the people from behind me, I ordered Rai. The next destination of the monster carriage is the training area for fighting practices.

Chapter 10: Training Area

On the way to the training area, Michelle-san said this.

“Ryouma-kun, could you also give us a tour of the slime research facility? I got interested after hearing you talk about it.” [Michelle]

The other four also seemed to be interested. Honestly speaking, that makes me happy, but…

“Unfortunately, the slime research facility is currently prohibited except for related personnel. I can’t promise you anything.” [Ryouma]

In order to make the most of the research results of the facility we allow tours for our trusted affiliates. We are also brazenly using the abilities of the slimes in the training facility. However, there are still slimes under research and other confidential matters within the research facility, so we can’t just recklessly let anyone enter.

Information is freely shared within the research facility regardless of experience or age, and the research is done together by all the researchers. However, the flow of information to the outside is being strictly monitored.

The facility’s security is also tight. Thirty of the people Rheinbach-sama introduced was hired to guard the facility. There are several expensive magical tools set in place. And even a barrier to defend against invasions through dimension magic or retreats through it has been put up.

“It’s unfortunate, but I guess it can’t be helped.” [Michelle]

Michelle-san seemed to have predicted my response, and she easily gave up the idea.

It’s not strange for research facilities to prohibit entry. People who are able to tour one are considered lucky, so it seems she wasn’t expecting much when she asked for a tour.

“It’s because even though my parents are researchers, I’m not allowed to enter their laboratory.” [Michelle]

Come to think of it, her family is a lineage of researchers. I guess it’s not that strange that she understands how these kind of facilities operate then.

As we talked like that, the northern gate of the first town entered our line of sight.

“Hmm? If we keep going this way, we’ll reach the gate.” [Kanan]
“Are we leaving the town?” [Michelle]
“Yes. The training area is located outside the town.” [Ryouma]

The training area and the magic training area were built at a location about an hour and a half to a two-hour distance walk outside the town for safety reasons. It’s a little closer to Gimuru from the midpoint between Gimuru and my house.

The area was positioned some distance away from the Grell Frogs so as to not affect them. There the trees were cut, and a lot of 150m x 100m was created. And then a rectangular building, rounded on one side, making it look like a smart ball or a pinball, was built on it.

As we passed the gates, I ordered Rai to speed up. At my orders he quickly sped up, and he ran like a horse. Surprised, Riera-san, couldn’t help but ask.

“Ryouma-dono, aren’t we going a little too fast?” [Riera]
“No problem. This kid has more than enough stamina for it.” [Ryouma]

After 2 years, this is what Rai’s skills look like.

Skills	Level
Stamina UP	Lv7
Vitality UP	Lv5
Strength UP	Lv4
Neutral Magic	Lv1

Qigong Lv3

He had the first three skills right from the start, so his growth as a cannonball rhino was faster than normal. Learning neutral magic as he grew up wasn't strange either. But the last skill on the other hand…

Qigong Lv3

From what I gather, there's never been an incident where a cannonball rhinos was able to use qigong, but for some reason, Rai can use it. It's probably because of me and the mimic slime that Rai turned out like this. I can't think of any other reason.

In these past two years that I've been training the mimic slime, I've taught it various battle techniques, allowing it to reach a level where it's able to somewhat put up a fight against me. One of the techniques I taught it was qigong.

But I also had the mimic slime eat some of Rai's fur, allowing it to transform into Rai. Because of that there were also times when I had the mimic slime train with Rai. Some time passed, and before I knew it, Rai was also able to use qigong.

Rai had a strong body from the start, so with qigong added to that, he's easily able to pull the monster carriage. And with him being able to maintain this speed for two hours, we arrived at the training area in no time at all.

On the other hand, although Rai was able to learn qigong, his neutral magic level is low. It would appear that due to the higher efficiency of the qigong which has a similar effect to the neutral magic, Strengthen Body, he doesn't use his magic much, causing low levels.

Now, going back to the topic…

As I continued to let Rai run with the monster carriage in tow for some time, we stopped by the right side of the road going toward the abandoned mine, and arrived at the training area that's surrounded by trees.

Before us stood the wall of a building with a number of big windows attached to it, and a boorish gate at the center that was big enough to let two carriages pass. There were four people watching over the gate. When we opened the gate,

those men came over. As I called out to them, we entered through the gate.

“Thank you for your work.” [Ryouma]
“It’s our pleasure!” [Gatekeepers]

As they replied, we passed through the gate.

Deep inside, I wryly smiled as I thought on how I just can’t get used to that atmosphere… Then as I was thinking that, Riera-san asked me.

“Those people were?” [Riera]
“Trainees. I consulted Rheinbach-sama, Elia’s grandfather, about the guards of the research facility. Because of that there are former knights amongst the instructors here. Those people back there are trainees of those former knights… Speaking of which, Riera-san, would you like to try out the training here after our match?” [Ryouma]
“Thank you, Ryouma-dono. Yes, I’d love to participate in the training.” [Riera]

She replied immediately… Her voice remains calm, but it seems she’s really happy deep inside.

Beyond the gate was a road enclosed in walls. We proceeded 6 meters through that path, and reached a place to stop our carriage at. I parked the monster carriage beside the other carriages that were already parked, and then I got off the carriage, and ordered Rai to wait there.

As Elia and the others were exiting the carriage, I began explaining.

“This is the training area where magic and other related subjects are taught. The building enclosing this parking is sturdy enough to stand even against magical beasts. Moreover, there are also passages inside the walls that are connected to the workshop ahead and the rooms inside the walls that we passed by after passing through the gate.” [Ryouma]
“There are rooms inside those walls? Is there anything in those?”
“There’s a kitchen where sandwiches and other simple food are made. The food made there is sold to people passing by, who are hungry after their training. The proceeds from those goes to helping out the training facility. Also, since last year, once a year during the Grell Frog outbreak, several stores open there in those windows that we saw by the gate, selling food, drinks, deodorant liquid, and other various things.” [Ryouma]

Those stores sell goods aimed at adventurers hunting grell frogs, so their profits are huge. After all, there are many young adventurers who fail to prepare adequately, and even experienced adventurers sometimes fall into unforeseen situations.

Even though the products sold by the stores are all priced higher than Gimuru's – especially the food – there are still a large number of adventurers who buy food before going home due to being hungry after a day's hard work.

Incidentally, the cooks cooking the food are the chef and baker apprentices of the training facility. The people selling the goods are merchant apprentices. And because we're allowing them to accumulate experience while letting them help, the labor costs are zero.

The students themselves planned for this for several weeks themselves in order to have a place where they can show off the skills they have learned. There are also people amongst the teachers who consider this to be a good graduation test. And more than anything, as it is a kind of event, everyone is having fun. Unfortunately, this year's is already over. It might have been better if the girls visited during the season.

"I see…" [Riera]
"Do any problems occur during the event?" [Elia]
"Of course. But in cases such as that, there are students studying here who are tasked with the duty of guarding the area, so it won't be an issue." [Ryouma]

There are a lot of people who come here to study fighting techniques, but not everyone studying how to fight is aspiring to be an adventurer.

For example, Crais-san, who we met yesterday as a gatekeeper of the first town, is also one of the students that trained here. His job, however, isn't an adventurer, but is instead a guard. That's because aside from those aiming to be adventurers, there are also those who are studying here with the intent of one day becoming knights. And as even aspiring adventurers are sometimes tasked with escort missions or missions to guard a residence or a store, the training area here can also train those aspiring to be knights.

"Now that you mention it." [Elia]
"Right? That's why it's not a problem even if magical beasts or evil adventurers

come. Also, other than the stores, there are also the students who make carriages, operating a stagecoach. There're also the students studying how to make clothes and accessories, selling clothes for adventurers to change into… Basically, the students here do whatever they can do." [Ryouma]
"This place is perfect for adventurers coming to work, huh?" [Kanan]

As the other girls laughed, seemingly saying, 'exactly!', I took them, and we went to a door that was in an opposite direction from the gate we entered. On either side of that door were paths leading to a kitchen, but we ignored that, and kept going until we reached a crossroad.

"Near the sides of this crossroad were two rooms. The one close to the parking area had workshops for weapons and armors, and on the other side were the changing rooms for men and women, a workshop for creating magic staves, and a medical office." [Ryouma]

If we kept going this path, we would eventually reach the training area, but Riera-san should change her clothes first. After all, she couldn't possibly want to fight looking the way she is right now, being dressed in an attire meant for a walk downtown, now would she?

As I pointed to a partitioning screen on the left hallway, I said.

"If you enter the hallway at either side, at the end of each can be found a changing room. The girl's changing room is to the left——" [Ryouma]

As I was saying that, it dawned on me. I haven't decided the rules of the match yet… What should I do? Riera-san is aiming to be a knight, so should we use the knights' rules? What do they do at their academy? If we're doing it, then if possible I'd like to go at it at full force…

"Ryouma-kun?" [Michelle]
"Something the matter?" [Riera]
"I just noticed that we haven't discussed the rules in our match, Riera-san. What should we do? If you teach me the rules of the academy that you're used to, I don't mind going with that." [Ryouma]

I might have said that with a hint of provocation, but even if I were to fight on Riera-san's terms, I wouldn't lose. Although this might be a bit excessive, I'm confident I can beat most people unless the rules are against me.

As I waited for Riera-san's reply, I noticed Riera-san's feelings weren't hurt in the slightest as she replied with a serious face.

"I'm fine with the rules that are used normally when matches are held here, but…" [Riera]

Mn? Is it something difficult to say? I wonder why?

"But?" [Ryouma]
"…Please excuse my shameless request, but would it be possible to have the match between me and Ryouma-dono be held one against five?" [Riera]

One on five? I don't really mind, but…

"Why?" [Ryouma]
"The gap between my strength and yours is too big. Alone, I would either lose as soon as I made my move, or lose before using up all my power if you were to hold back. I've been feeling this way this since I saw you fight the bandits on the way to Gimuru." [Riera]

Ahh, that time, huh?

"Then what's the reason why you want a one on five match?" [Ryouma]
"There's also the difference in number, but… Since us five entered the academy, we've been training together these past three years as one group. And although it wasn't easy, before this extended vacation, we managed to take the seat of the most excellent group. So last night, we talked amongst ourselves, and wondered whether or not the five of us would be able to put up a fight against you." [Riera]"
"Mn, so the other four are also in agreement then?" [Ryouma]

The other four nodded.

Then it's fine. I've also fought against parties of two or three adventurers from time to time, and aside from Elia's magic and magic power, their fighting experience is shallow, so I should be able to manage.

"I understand. The rules don't prohibit matches of one on five. Also, although it's a bit early, anything goes in the match. Magic weapons and tools are fair game. The referee will be the one to decide on the winner." [Ryouma]
"Thank you. And sorry for just saying whatever I want." [Riera]

“Oh, no, no… It was just a little unexpected is all.” [Ryouma]
“Unexpected?” [Riera]

With the image I had of Riera-san, what she said just now was almost miraculous. I mean… she struck me as a somewhat foolhardy girl after all.

“How should I put it… straight forward? In any case, you strike me as someone who would wish for a fair match regardless of the difference in strength.” [Ryouma]
“Mu…” [Riera]
“Pf! …!” [Michelle]

Riera-san looked like she just swallowed a bitter bug when she heard my words. All the while, Michelle-san who was behind her did her best to keep herself from laughing.

“True… I certainly do give off that sort of image, but… After seeing you beat those bandits… After hearing from Sebasu-dono about how you’re strong enough to be an A Rank adventurer… And after seeing that you have a B Rank magical beast with you, even I can understand that it’s impossible for me to win.” [Riera]
“Riera’s dad and her two older brothers actually warned her in the past. They told her not to be too idealistic, but――“ [Michelle]
“Please don’t tell him that.” [Riera]

Ah, so she had that sort of temperament.

But on the other hand, it seems she’s able to make a proper decision based on the events that unfold before her and the information that she has. She might still be a bit rough when it comes to determining the strength of her opponent, but it should be fine so long as she improves that gradually.

She’s able to borrow her friends’ help when she knows she can’t do something by herself. I don’t know if Riera-san was the one who asked for this herself, but regardless, there are also people who are too stubborn to accept other people’s help… Also, my initial impression of Riera wasn’t low by any means, but with this, I think I should raise my initial assessment of her.

Speaking of which, I wonder how good Elia’s gotten at her magic? That’ll be another thing to look forward to.

As I was thinking that, Elia and the others received their equipment from Sebasu-san, and I sent them off to the girls' changing room. After that, I went to prepare as well.

Chapter 11: Before the Match

I took out my equipment from my Dimension Home, and did my preparations inside the changing room.

My current attire consists of a jet black inner shirt and a jet black pair of pants. This set is leather armor made out of the leather of the cannonball rhinos.

My adventurer friends often tell me to sew some embroidery over my shirt or pants with gold threads or silver threads, but this one doesn't have any ornaments. An armor is good so long as it can protect. It's true that this armor set might not look that good on the outside, but it's highly efficient.

For example, this jet black armor is made by using the bamboo charcoal that's been made at my house, separating it and purifying it into carbon. And then mixing that carbon with the sticky slime's thread in a ratio of 1:9, creating a fiber that's similar to carbon fiber. However, I don't know how this imitation compares to the real thing. After all, I don't know how close it is to the real thing in the first place, and I don't know what their differences are either.

Speaking of carbon fiber, at first, when I tried to create a thread out of just carbon, I couldn't create anything except for a thin, fractured, lump of carbon. When I mixed it with the sticky slime's thread using my alchemy, I managed to increase its strength to a whole another level. While caution may need to be exercised when facing fire, ice, or electric magic when using this kind of material, it's extraordinarily strong against physical attacks.

"Which weapon should I use?" [Ryouma]

The weapon I normally use is the adamantite katana that my grandfather left me. Other than that I have my two magic staves. I wonder if I should use a staff as a countermeasure against Elia's magic? …After a little more thinking, I decided to go with the katana in the end.

"As expected, let's go with this…" [Ryouma]

I placed the katana I took out by my waist, and then I left the male changing room.

When I went back to the crossroads where I talked at with Elia and the others, the only one that was there was Sebasu-san. But just as I was thinking that, the other five suddenly appeared from the other side, walking.

Walking in the lead was Kanan-san who wore light armor. She had a silver bracelet on each hand, probably as substitute for gauntlets. She wore leather armor, and two swords could be seen hanging by her waist. Twin swords, huh? Or is the other one a spare? Well… I'll find out when we fight.

Next is Riera-san, but…

"Sorry for making you wait." [Riera]
"I just got here actually… Still… The impression a person gives sure changes with different clothes, huh?" [Ryouma]

She gave off the image of a cold beauty when wearing normal clothes and with her whole face visible, but with the way she looks right now, dressed in a chainmail, she truly looks like a soldier or a knight.

From afar, I thought she was just wearing tights over her whole body, but it seems she also has a metal plate attached over her chest to bolster her defense. On her waist hung a sword, and on her left hand was a shield… As expected, her equipment gives off a strong impression of having been made for fighting.

"Ryouma-dono, the clothes you are wearing sure is different, huh?" [Riera]
"It's special equipment." [Ryouma]

It was here after seeing the five of them that something caught my attention, so I asked them about it.

"Speaking of which, did you all buy your equipment from the same store? They seem to be similarly made." [Ryouma]

Elia, Miyabi-san, and Michelle-san are all wearing pants easy to move in. Also, they are all wearing leather chest protectors and a set of uniform robes. Even the staves they're wielding is uniform. And as for Riera-san and Kanan-san, the swords they are using look similar… especially the sheaths and the hilts.

“These are supplied by the academy. It’s included in the tuition fee we pay, so everyone receives a set of equipment for use in our classes.” [Michelle]
“They’re mass produced, but after three years, we’ve already gotten used to them.” [Riera]
“I see.” [Ryouma]

That’s why it looks so similar.

“From the first year until the third year it’s forbidden to use personal equipment.” [Elia]
“That’s why from the fourth year onwards, armor of all sorts, from bad to good, come out.” [Miyabi]
“Training aside… do students start seriously training from the fourth year?” [Ryouma]

Isn’t that dangerous?

“It’s to get used to the weapons. It’s also because we have the magic tools that were created for safety reasons during the founding of the school.” [Elia]

Apparently, those magic tools when worn will forcefully teleport the person wearing it if it seems they’re about to take a damage greater than the damage permitted during training. Because of that there’s little danger to one’s life during training. And even the wounds incurred during training are at most at the level of cuts.

Honestly, I’m more surprised that magic tools from during the academy’s creation is still around…

“That’s quite convenient.” [Ryouma]
“It’s true they can guarantee our safety, but the sense of tension being taken away could also be seen as a minus. The knights also have something similar, but according to my older brother, they rarely use it.” [Riera]

That’s true, I wonder if I should introduce it to the training in the facility here. But now that I think about it, it sure feels strange. I’m interested, but I guess that’s about all there is to it.

“That’s also true… Anyway, we’ve already finished our preparations, so… shall we go?” [Ryouma]

With our conversation already done, I proposed to move to the training area.

As we passed through the door at the end of the crossroads, the area that next appeared before us was an area that was mostly outside already, only having a roof over it. A little further ahead was a wall perpendicular the hallway, serving as a demarcation. There was no roof past the hallway, and on either side of the hallway could be heard the voices of the people training.

“’Fire Ball’!” [Mage Student 1]
“’Wind Hammer’!” [Mage Student 2]
“’Rock Bullet’!” [Mage Student 3]

To the left of the hallway is the training area for magic. Presently, the magician students are practicing their attack magic by firing them against dummy targets. The furthest target is about 40 meters away.

“Squad one, ready! Fire!” [Instructor 1]
“Immediately back down after firing, and switch with the next squad!” [Instructor 2]
“You over there! You’re too slow!” [Instructor 3]

To the right of the hallway are the people practicing their bows and throws. That just now were the archers. It seems they’re doing group practice, and are currently being driven hard by their three instructors.

The girls followed me as they looked at the training area. When we passed through the boundary marked by the wall, their eyes found themselves stuck on the building before them.

In front of us was a 4 meter wall around which many stairs were installed. The area surrounding that was a marsh. Only the hallway continuing to the building and the entrance of the building wasn’t surrounded.

“This is where the match will take place?” [Riera]
“Yes. This is the sports ground of this training facility. Training for non-projectile weapons, matches, and real combat drills take place here. The building is elliptical in shape with a diameter of 80 meters. In square meters, it has an area of about 5,000 square meters.” [Ryouma]
“What are the stairs attached to the walls for?” [Miyabi]
“Knights and guards have to walk up staircases a lot in castle walls and

fortresses. These stairs are to prepare the students for that. The idea is to let them build up stamina by having them go up and down. Also, the marsh here is for adventurers to train their ability to search in places with bad footing." [Ryouma]

Both exercises train the legs and loins, so classes use either exercise. Incidentally, there is a water and earth magic-using slime grazing within the marsh known as mud slime. It's taking care of the marsh, so there's no strange smell here like the one that could be smelled by the marsh were the grell frog outbreak occurs.

After that we entered the building. Inside were over 300 people training, and sounds of weapons clashing and warriors yelling could be heard all over.

"Wow, that's a lot of people." [Riera]
"Aside from the students, the adventurers of the town also come here. Please wait for a moment, I'll just go and ask for a good place." [Ryouma]

I looked around as I said that. As I did, I saw the instructor, Barbet-san, standing by the wall. I immediately ran up to him.

"Barbet-san." [Ryouma]
"Why if it isn't Ryouma-dono. What's up?" [Barbet]
"I'm about to have a match with five others to test out their mettle. Do you know any spacious place?" [Ryouma]
"I see… Mu… By five… are you referring to the students from the Imperial Capital's Academy?" [Barbet]

When I looked at the girls' direction, Barbet-san said that as he looked at them. He understands well.

"You know?" [Ryouma]
"I've also aspired to be a knight before. I recognize their equipment from the time when I went to the Imperial Capital's Academy." [Barbet]

I see, so that's how he knows. looks like that style of the equipment they're using hasn't changed for quite some time.

"There's only 15 minutes left till lunch break. At that time, the building should free up quite a bit of space. So you all should just do your warm ups till then."

[Barbet]
“Alright, I got it. Thank you very much.” [Ryouma]

As I thanked Barbet-san, I went back to Elia’s group.

“The people training will have their lunch break in 15 minutes, so just do your warm ups until then.” [Ryouma]

When I said that, the five girls immediately went to an area near the wall with no people, and began doing some physical exercises. Seeing that, I sat at a place somewhat distance from theirs, and closed my eyes.

Three years ago I met the former knight-commander, Shiva-san. Since then, for almost two years, I’ve been training myself in my spare time with the pointers that Shiva-san gave me.

As a result, although my martial skills may not have improved a lot, I was able to relearn the coordination between my magic and my martial arts., and I was able to feel true growth. One of the things I gained was a much more precise magic perception. After training day after day, I was able to improve this ability, and I understood just how useful it is.

Calm the mind, and focus yourself to sense the power of magic.

As I focused my senses on magic power, lumps of magic transformed into shapes of people, gradually appeared around me. These human-shaped masses of magic power are none other than the magic power they hold inside them. These masses of magic power is different from the magic power released when invocating magic. They’re a little harder to sense, but if you can sense them, then you can completely pinpoint the location of that person.

I focused even harder…

I can sense magic with greater accuracy. And because of the differences in the masses of magic power, I can tell the difference in their magical strength.

The amount of magic power changes based on the use of magic, so I can’t tell who the person is based on that. I can however calculate the amount of magic power they have. The amount of concentration required isn’t a joke though. I can do it right now, but it’s impossible while in the middle of a battle.

In any case, I better gather some information before I fight Elia's group… Now, I wonder just how much you've grown in this past two years, Elia…

After calculating the magic power of the five girls, I was able to get a precise calculation of their current magic power. In numerical form, arranged from highest to low, their magic power is as follows:

Name	Magic Power (Approximate)
Elia	250000
Kanan	40000
Miyabi	10000
Michelle	7000
Riera	2000

…I knew Elia had a lot of magic power, but the others too?

In this world, normal people have about a hundred.
Warriors who use magic in order to increase their cards have around 500 to 700.
A normal magician has 1,000 to 5,000.
And a royal court magician has 10,000 to 50,000.

Even the one with the least magic power amongst them, Riera-san, has enough to pass for a magician… I mean, her aside, Kanan-san actually has 40,000!? People from the beastmen tribes shouldn't have a lot of magic power, and yet… This has to be my first time seeing one with 40,000 points of magic power.

I can also feel some magic power from her two bracelets. Those must be some sort of magic tool. I don't know what kind of magic's been imbued into those, but I should take care.

"Ryouma-sama, it will almost be time for the match." [Sebasu]
"Already? …Thank you very much, Sebasu-san." [Ryouma]

At Sebasu-san’s words, I noticed that the people training has already started their break. Each one of them began to leave the building either to go beneath the shade of a tree to eat their bento or to go buy some food. As I sent a sidelong glance to those people, I shifted my gaze to the five girls. My gaze met with Riera-san’s.

As we neared each other, I called out to her.

“Then… shall we?” [Ryouma]
“Thank you for exchanging pointers with me.” [Riera]
“We won’t let you beat us so easily!” [Kanan]
“We’ll fight with everything we’ve got!” [Elia]

As we went against the flow of people, we walked toward the center of the training area. Elia’s group and I faced each other within a space of about 6 metersr. Sebasu-san stood at the center as our referee.

There are trainees and adventurers watching us from afar, but Elia and the others don’’t seem to mind.

The girls are arranged with Riera-san and Kanan-san standing in front, protecting the magicians, Elia and the two others, at the back. They wielded their staves and swords as if it was second nature.

Following them, I too unsheathed my katana from its sheath. At that moment, the moment when my katana left its sheath, a clear sound resounded.

…Since the day I received this blade, I’ve been using it day after day in my training and in my battles, and yet not once has the blade of this katana rusted nor has its brilliance darkened.

A magnificent swing… as always. Even though I’ve seen it so many times.

Chapter 12: The Match Part 1

Ryouma pulled out the katana from its sheath, and confirmed that there was no damage. Not even a single sign of wear could be seen on the blade.

The adamantite used in the blade of this katana is extremely tough. Unless he does something absurd, the thin blade of the katana wouldn't wear down even without cladding it in Ki. He could even cut iron plates. If he were to clad the blade in Ki, then he could cut enemies into pieces like he would an armor.

Adamantite becomes more durable and tougher the purer it is. But at the same time, its resistance to heat and corrosion also increases, making it harder to work with. The methods of forging the katana is the same as with a normal one, but there's a world of difference in the heat of the forge and the time required.

The adamantite used in Ryouma's katana is 77% pure. The limits acknowledged by blacksmiths all over the world is said to be only 75%, so Ryouma's adamantite that surpassed that limit by another 2% is a high-purity adamantite.

But even then, that limit of 75% is what you could call a base point from where you can do anything, so there are plenty of people who create adamantite weapons by mixing adamantite with iron, creating an alloy with a purity of about 60%, to make it easier to work with. But even then, it's still a luxury, so there are barely any stores that sell them.

When Ryouma pulled out his weapon, Elia and the others immediately noticed it. Riera was able to tell what material the katana was made out of, but although the other four weren't privy to weapons, even they could tell that Ryouma's katana wasn't just a common weapon. A sense of caution rose within them.

Sebasu confirmed the rules.

"There are no restrictions on the magic, weapons, and tools that can be used. The winner will be decided by the referee – in this case, me. When I decide that

one of you girls has already lost, then you'll have to withdraw from the fight. Once all five of you has withdrawn, you lose. In the same way, if Ryouma receives a powerful attack first, then it will be his loss. Is everyone in agreement with these rules?" [Sebasu]

At those words, Ryouma and the girls glanced at each other, and then they all agreed.

"Then……. Start!" [Sebasu]
" 'Fire Ball' " [Elia & Miyabi]
" 'Rock Bullet' " [Michelle]

Immediately after the match began, the three magicians from the girls' side fired their magic.

Ryouma dodged the ball of flame fired by Elia and Miyabi, and he easily cut down the rock projectile fired off by Michelle's Rock Bullet.

But before Ryouma could begin his counter attack, Riera came slashing at him.

"Ha!!" [Riera]

The duel between Riera and Ryouma began, and the sound of clanging metal resounded within the vicinity.

Riera's swings were quite fast, and had a decent amount of power behind them. Seeing that, Ryouma's appraisal for her rose up.

(Her style's a bit textbookish, but while I'm holding back, she is able to respond well to my attacks… If I were to compare her to the students and adventurers I've fought so far, then… I guess she'd be around the level of a D Rank adventurer? She's still lacking in experience, but that's something she'll continue to pile up from here on)

As he thought that, Ryouma parried the descending blade aimed at the crown of his head with his katana. And then using the force of the attack, he entered Riera's right flank, and he struck the backside of his katana's blade at Riera. However, Riera was able to block that attack by raising her shield up.

Immediately after, Riera took the sword that Ryouma parried, and swept with it sideways from beneath the shield, difficult to see.

Ryouma retreated, and dodged the sword. He took some distance. But it was at that moment, that magic came flying at him from the side in the blink of an eye. The magic that came shooting at him were three fire arrows. The girls clearly had no intentions of holding back with Ryouma as their opponent.

” ‘Water Wall’ ” [Ryouma]

At Ryouma’s magic, a wall of water immediately rose up midair, blocking the three fire arrows. Ryouma decied to change his target. This time, he tried attacking Elia’s group. As the water wall that blocked the fire arrows collapsed, the moment it fell to the ground, Ryouma rushed up to Elia’s group.

“You’re not going anywhere!!” [Kanan]

Before Ryouma could reach Elia’s group, Kanan blocked his way, and kept him at bay.

(I see, so Riera-san is the vanguard, while Elia’s group is responsible for magic attacks and support, while Kanan-san’s role is to stop those that get past Riera-san)

As Ryouma thought that, Kanan began to release magic power. Having sensed that with his Magic Perception, Ryouma was able to understand that the magic power Kanan released filled her two bracelets.

(Don’t use magic tools)
“Let’s go!”

As she said that, Kanan shot off like a bullet toward Ryouma.

(I have plenty of margin to deal with her, but… she’s a lot faster than expected)
“Ei! Take that! Ha!” [Kanan]

As Ryouma deal with Kanan’s consecutive attacks, he began analyzing the situation.

(……Honestly speaking, she doesn’t have a lot of skill behind her attacks. She seems to have practice the basics a lot, but as expected, she’s fast. Also, on top of being a member of the dog beastmentribe known for their high physical skills, she’s probably also using physical strengthening magic. Kanan shouldn’t be able to use magic, so it’s probably the effect of those two bracelets she has.

Moreover…)

“Fuu.”

“O-Oops, that was dangerous…” [Kanan]

Ryouma aimed for the opening in between Kanan’s consecutive strikes, but just like Ryouma did awhile ago, she jumped back, and dodged. Kanan wasn’t able to predict Ryouma’s move, but she was somehow able to barely dodge and defend agiainst Ryouma’s attack.

(Kanan-san seems to have good eyes and reflexes. It seems she dodged my attack after seeing it. She’s able to follow my attacks with her eyes. And although she’s just barely managing to, she’s able to deal with my feints.)

“Sora!”

Here, Ryouma decided to try something out.

He wielded his katana with only one hand, and struck it out, getting Kanan’s attention to one side. As he did that, he took his remaining free hand, and struck lightly from Kanan’s blind spot at her side.

“Tch, not yet!”

Ryouma’s fist didn’t seem to have had much effect as Kanan immediately began her counter attack. But because of the attack from her blind spot easily being able to hit her, Ryouma was able to understand that Kanan’s strength actually resulted from her good eyes and the magic tools that she had equipped. Moreover, although he was holding back, the fist he struck out at Kanan’s side before would normally have plenty of effect. The fact that had little to no effect on her meant that she was in fact in possession of a magic tool imbued with physical strengthening.

And then just as Ryouma expected, Kanan fought by activating the two magic tools on her arms.

(She might have talent, but she still has a long way to go. With the magic tool she’s D… No, taking her ability into consideration, she should be E Rank. Without the magic tools then F Rank. She’s plenty strong enough to deal with goblins. Now let me try putting out a bit more strength from here on…)

Five minutes later.

” ‘Ice–‘ ”
” ‘Flame Lance’ ”
” ‘–Lance’ ! …Again?” [Elia]
“That’s strange… Our magic is completely being crushed.” [Michelle]

Ryouma stopped testing them a little, and started pushing harder against the five girls. The two vanguards fought tooth and nail with Ryouma, keeping him from attacking the three girls at the back. Support continued to come from the girls at the back, but… the magic they fired were all stopped by Ryouma’s own magic. They were at their limits.

“I know Ryouma’s crazy strong, but what the hell is that! Tch, from the right!”

At Miyabi’s words, the three girls who had gathered into one spot, moved to the right, dodging Ryouma’s magic. Since the match had begun, these three girls hadn’t separated from each other. If they were to scatter, and fight separated, then Kanan and Riera wouldn’t be able to protect them.

The one shooting the most magic amongst the three is the one with the most magic power, Elia. As soon as space is made between Ryouma and the two vanguards, Elia would fire off her magic to support the two girls. Miyabi and Michelle also used their magic, but because they didn’t have Elia’s magic power, they couldn’t fire as recklessly as she did.

“Ha……Fu!”
” ‘Stun Arrow’ ”
Kanan began to show signs of fatigue, while Ryouma still looked to have plenty of stamina left. Kanan reached her limits, but before she could get cut down, Riera’s electric magic came flying at Ryouma, allowing Kanan to step back as Ryouma had to dodge the attack. This time it was Riera’s turn to exdchange blows with Ryouma. Like this the two vanguards substituted with each other to keep Ryouma at bay.

The power Ryouma is demonstrating is already sufficient to supress an average D Rank adventurer party, but Kanan and the others are persistently enduring. Ryouma could defeat them if he wanted, but seeing them try so hard, he decided to keep this up to see how long they would persist.

Around that time, the people watching started cheering for the five girls.

“Do your best—!” [Spectator 1]
“You’re doing great, girls!” [Spectator 2]
“Go at him with the intention to kill!” [Spectator]

At some point in the match, the spectators started cheering for the five girls. However, the only ones who could hear their cheer were the other spectators, Sebasu, and Ryouma who was fighting with strength to spare. The girls who were being cheered were far too caught up in the fight to have the luxury to spare. They couldn’t hear anything from the spectators at all.

(It’s always like this, but still… no one really cheers for me, huh? Well… at least no one’s booing.)

As Ryouma was thinking that, Elia and Miyabi casted their magic, and Michelle called out Riera and Kanan’s name in a loud voice. After that, she made some sort of signal with her hand, and the two girls wordlessly nodded.

The girls were clearly planning something. Ryouma could bring out his full power here, and crush the vanguards before they pulled off whatever they were scheming, but Ryouma decided to wait and see what they would do instead.

After a few seconds of keeping vigil, Riera’s movements suddenly changed.

“Haa!!!” [Riera]
(Her movement is different from before! Is she planning to finish it here?)

She slashed down, she slashed up, she cut sideways, and she slashed diagonally. Although she was fighting fiercely before, it still seemed steady, but right now it was as if she was desperate. It was a sort of unyielding style that seemed to want to throw everything at Ryouma.

“You would even use shield bash…!?” [Ryouma]
“Ei!” [Kanan]

At this moment in time, Riera joined the fray to aid her, and at the same time, Elia released a large amount of magic power. Even the spectators who were seemed to have felt a part of that power. What Ryouma saw left many of the magicians glued to the scene. They couldn’t help but raise a commotion at what was taking place before their eyes. In the next moment——

“Wh–!?” [Ryouma]

Elia’s magic power wrapped itself around Ryouma, and then transformed itself into pressure.

(My body is heavy. My movement is being suppressed)

Ryouma tried to lighten the weight with his Qigong, putting emphasis on defense and evasion, but his body became heavier instead.

(Considering Elia’s continuing to release magic power, a curse? …No. A curse would normally have a peculiar melancholy about it. There’s no such thing here. Moreover, it feels like I’m being held by something heavy… if so, then…)
“Telekinesis, huh?” [Ryouma]

The moment Ryouma worded that, a color of impatience appeared on the faces of Riera and Kanan, who were both in front of him.

Neutral Magic『Telekinesis』
It’s a kind of magic that exhibits power only on the target through the use of neutral magic power. It’s generally used for transportation. The bigger and heavier the object to transport is, the greater the magic power consumption. Moreover, the consumption of magic power is extremely high as the caster needs to continuously pour out magic power to use it. Except for special situations, there are barely any people who use it.

It’s a different story for Elia who has a colossal amount of magic power. She’s able to hold down Ryouma through the sheer brute force of her magic power.

Ryouma resisted directly.

“‘Telekinesis’!” [Ryouma]
“I won’t lose…” [Elia]

Ryouma forced back Elia’s restraint with his own magic power! A battle between Ryouma and Elia’s magic power began!

Their respective magic power rivals each other’s, but because Ryouma was better at controlling his magic power, he was gradually able to lift the load off his body. However, Riera who was currently in front of Ryouma wasn’t just going to stand and wait for him to finish removing Elia’s restraint.

Riera rushed up to Ryouma, and she used the sword in her right hand to slash diagonally up from her left. Ryouma tried to bring up the katana he had in his left, but Elia brought her power up to maximum output, stopping Ryouma in his tracks. Moreover, the target of her attack wasn't Ryouma's entire body. Rather she focused it at Ryouma's left hand that was hodling the katana.

(The other parts can move. The only heavy part is my left hand. In fact, it actually hurts a bit… if I hadn't used my qigong, my bones would have probably broken.)

While Ryouma's left hand couldn't move, Riera's sword approached. Ryouma gave up on his left hand, and he softly brought down his right hand, and moved it as if he were drawing a circle. His hand met with Riera's right wrist, propping it up, and averting the sword away. As Riera swung downward, Ryouma grabbed her wrist, entered into Riera's right flank, and keeping up that momentum, he rotated around her to her back.

In order to prevent her back from being taken, Riera turned to her right, turning counterclockwise as she tried to face Ryouma as she pulled her right arm that was currently being grabbed. But at that moment, Ryouma went against Riera's movement. He took a step, spun his body to the left as he pushed out his arm, and as his wrist went pass Riera's shoulder, he was able to take her back.

Meanwhile, because Riera tried to shake off the hand took that had grabbed her arm too much, her center of balance was focused too much on her back, and her posture broke. Like that she was thrown.

"Riera!" [Elia]

When Elia saw Ryouma throw Riera, her concentration was cut, and in her anxiety for Riera's safety, she screamed out. Because of this, Ryouma's left arm was freed.

(Move!)

The other vanguard, Kanan, was headed for Ryouma. She ahd struck out with all of her strength, but with a paper-thin difference, her attack was dodged. The next thing that entered her eyes was the backside of the blade of Ryouma's katana.

In the next instant, a dull sound resounded.

“Hau~ku!” [Kanan]
“Kana, tch!”

As Riera who was just thrown a while ago began to rose up, she sent a side glance to Kanan upon hearing her pained voice at being hit by the back of Ryouma’s katana. At that moment, Ryouma came rushing at Riera. The other three girls rained magic on Ryouma, but Ryouma wouldn’t stop.

Riera managed to block two of Ryouma’s attacks after fixing her posture, but the third strike came allowed her chin to meet with the pommel of Ryouma’s katana. She fell to the ground.

At that, Sebasu decalred.

“Kanan-san and Riera-san has withdrawn from the fight.”

Saying only those words, Sebasu used his dimension magic, and in the next instant, he took the girls outside of the battle area, and then he returned to his spot as a referee.

The match has yet to end. Only, now… the girls no longer have their vanguards.

Chapter 13 Match (Last Part)

After losing their two vanguards, only the three rear guards were left. The girls had no chance of winning in a melee, but…

“We haven’t lost yet!” [Miyabi]
“We’ll fight until the end! Elia!” [Michelle]
“I-I got it!” [Elia]

Elia was feeling bad because she lost her focus, allowing Ryouma to break through, and defeat their two vanguards. But the other remaining two girls brought her back into the match.

The situation was grim, but the girls hadn’t lost their will to fight just yet. Seeing that, Ryouma smiled.

(Right, right… It’d be disappointing if you were to give up here)

As Ryouma was about to engage the three, Michelle and Miyabi’s voice resounded.

“’Wind Cutter’!” [Michelle]
“’Flame Bomb’!” [Miyabi]

A blade of wind and a ball of exploding flame shot at Ryouma.

“‘Earth Wall’ ‘Hardening’” [Ryouma]

Ryouma erected a wall of earth, blocking the wind of blade. And with the wall reinforced, he was also able to block against the explosion of the Flame Bomb.

Seeing that Ryouma was hidden behind the wall, the three girls decided to back off to make some distance. In pursuit, Ryouma jumped out from behind the wall.

“One more time! ‘Flame Bomb’!” [Miyabi]

Miyabi shot a ball of flame against Ryouma who was chasing after them, but

Ryouma leapt to his left, avoiding the blast radius.

“‘Earth Needle’” [Michelle]

Michelle aimed for the moment right after Ryouma dodged, and she fired needles of stones from the ground toward Ryouma. But Ryouma only cut those down with his katana.

As the distance between them gradually shortened, Elia, who still had plenty of magic power to spare, began to release her magic power. With the expression on her face serious, she seemed to be completely absorbed in her magic. Sweat even seemed to trickle down her face.

(Telekinesis again? This time, before you cast it, I’ll…)

Ryouma filled his legs with strength, but just as he was about to try and close the distance in one leap, he was intercepted.

“We won’t let you—!“ [Michelle]
“Get any further than this! [Miyabi]

Michelle and Miyabi who were both standing beside Elia, walked a few steps forward, and took out four wooden plates about the size of a telephone card from their bosom, and threw them. The two thrown by Miyabi dodged Ryouma, falling behind him, while Michelle’s fell on the ground right in front of him.

“Magic power… Magic tools?” [Ryouma]

Having felt magic power from those plates, Ryouma stopped moving. The four plates that fell on the ground began to shine red and brown. Then the two plates that fell in front of him changed the surrounding area, about a meter from where the plates were, into a pitfall. The two plates behind him shot out of balls of flame, creating a sound resembling that of firecrackers. But that’s all they did.

From the strength of those fire balls and from the magic power, Ryouma immediately concluded that they were no danger to him. However, during the opening made by those plates, Elia was finally able to make her move.

“I’m going. ‘Fire Storm’!!” [Elia]

The fire magic she casted was the advanced fire attribute magic, ‘Fire Storm’.

Although it was much smaller compared to her grandfather, Rheinbach, who

was an expert at fire magic, it was still big enough to swallow about four or five people within the blaze of its flames. As the vortex of fire began to scatter its heat into the surrounding area, it tried to swallow Ryouma into it.

“So you’re now able to use advanced magic. Although it seems you’re still not used to it. ‘Blizzard’” [Ryouma]

As Ryouma worded his thoughts upon seeing Elia cast that vortex of flame, he casted a slightly weaker ‘Blizzard’.

Fire Storm is a vortex of flame, while Blizzard is a ferocious snowstorm. Beads of ice and a chill cold enough to freeze one’s body clashed with that vortex of flame. In less than a few seconds, nothing but mist remained of the two magic.

The three girls immediately tried to cast another set of magic, but Ryouma didn’t give them a chance to.

“’Teleport’” [Ryouma]

Miyabi and Michelle were guarding the front, so Ryouma used his dimension magic to teleport right behind Elia.

“Kyau!?”

As soon as he teleported, Ryouma lightly hit Elia with the back of his katana. It was only after getting hit that Elia finally realized that Ryouma was there behind her. With no methods of escape, she helplessly received the brunt of Ryouma’s attack.

It was only because of Elia’s yelp upon being hit that the other two girls who were standing ahead noticed Ryouma.

But by the time they noticed him, Ryouma had already passed by Elia’s left flank, and was in the middle of attacking Michelle. The turn of events was just too sudden. Michelle couldn’t react at all.

“I’m not gonna let you!” [Miyabi]

Miyabi was able to react a little faster than Michelle, and she intercepted Ryouma. But the most she was able to do was ram her body against Michelle to push her out of the way, resulting in her getting hit by the katana instead.

Moreover, because she suddenly jumped in, she unfortunately took the blade

to her face… Ryouma immediately lessened the strength, but her face ended up hurting quite a bit.

Anxious, Ryouma used his Mega Heal on Miyabi as he lightly hit the back of her head with the back of his katana. Right after, Miyabi was declared defeated, and treatment of her injuries began. She only had some bruises and a nose bleed, so her wounds should heal quickly.

After that, Elia and Miyabi were made to withdraw by Sebasu.

Ryouma looked at Michelle who had been pushed out of the way by Miyabi. Michelle came over to talk to Ryouma. No, rather than talk, it would be more apt to say that she voiced out her impressions of the match.

“As expected, you’re really strong. You were fighting five of us, and yet now, the only one left is me.” [Michelle]
“It’s because I’m an adventurer. I wouldn’t be able to do my job if I weren’t strong.” [Ryouma]
“Well that’s true.” [Michelle]

Michelle’s unenthusiastic conduct might have looked like she had already admitted defeated, but Ryouma thought different.

(Looks like she’s not going to accept her lost just yet… Now, just what is she scheming I wonder…)

As Ryouma thought that, he spoke a few words to Michelle.

“Will you surrender?” [Ryouma]
“Nope. If I were to surrender here, the other four will get mad at me. But I don’t think I’ll be able to win alone against Ryouma. I don’t have a plan either. So…” [Michelle]

As she finished saying that, she took out four more plates like the ones she took out before out of her robe. She filled those with magic power, and threw them against Ryouma.

“There’s no other way than to fight and have an honorable defeat!” [Michelle]
(So she’s made up her mind.)

One of the plates that were thrown caused a small explosion in midair, while

the other three made sounds resembling firecrackers just like the ones from before.

Ryouma was wary of the plates as he had seen them used just a while ago, but…

“’Rock Bullet’!” [Ryouma]

As he had noticed that magic formations had been drawn over the surface of the plates, Ryouma clad his katana in ki before the plates could even activate, and he struck them all down. Because of that the plates couldn’t show their strength, and they turned into nothing but mere wooden plates.

These cards are the one of the fruits of her research in magic formation. She created these things to be useable in combat, so they’re made out of wood, and designed such that they’d be easy to throw. One can activate these things by filling them magic power, and the resulting effect depends on the magic formation drawn.

But that’s only when the magic formation is safe. If the magic formation is broken before it can activate, then the magic power can only scatter away and vanish. The knowledge Ryouma got from the documents he inherited from his grandmother somehow proved useful today.

But it seems that Michelle predicted that Ryouma would be able to see through the weakness of her plates as she didn’t seem to be bothered in the slightest. As Ryouma drew closer, she threw more of her wooden plates. Of course, it was dealt with by Ryouma. But as Ryouma neared enough to reach Michelle with his katana, Michelle did something unexpected.

“’Paralyze Mist’” [Michelle]

Michelle calmly chanted those words as she summoned a paralyzing mist with poison magic.

Ryouma held his breath, and just in case, he chantlessly casted the antidote magic, ‘Antidote’ to counteract the poison magic. He also used the preventive magic, ‘Vaccine’. After that, he couldn’t help but be surprised at the sudden turn of events as he muttered within his thoughts to himself.

“To think she would actually go this far…” [Ryouma]

The moment the poison mist covered Ryouma, it also covered Michelle herself.

(I did think she would fight to the end, but to think she would actually commit suicide. At most maybe a simultaneous hit, but I would never do something like this even though I have poison resistance…)

Normally, you'd use magic in a way that it wouldn't hurt you. But Michelle used herself as a decoy, and created a poison mist while fully knowing she'd get caught up in it. As a result, she was able to successfully enshroud Ryouma within the poison mist.

"'Storm'" [Ryouma]

Ryouma immediately casted an intermediate wind magic, and blew the poison mist up into the sky. When the mist had cleared up, Michelle, having inhaled the poison mist she created, fell over.

"With this you won't be able to fight anymore." [Ryouma]
"R…ight…" [MIchelle]

Michelle spoke when the referee, Sebasu, came over to confirm the situation, but because of the poison, she was visibly weak.

"The winner of this duel is Ryouma-sama!" [Sebasu]

The fallen Michelle, and Ryouma who stood up on his own two legs, still able to move. The victor was clear as day, but Sebasu still declared the results in a loud voice. Upon which, a great chorus of cheers erupted for Michelle.

"You did great, girl!" [Spectator 1]
"Your friends too!" [Spectator 2]
"You all did well consider Ryouma was your opponent!" [Spectator 3]

As those cheers rained down on them, Elia and Miyabi rushed over to Michelle.

"Michelle, are you alright?" [Elia]
"I'm… alright. I'm just… a bit… paralyzed." [Michelle]
"You don't sound convincing at all." [Miyabi]

Elia anxiously checked on Michelle's condition. Michelle tried to say she was alright, but Miyabi denied her, saying she wasn't.

"You three sure get along. I need to fix her up, so excuse me a bit." [Ryouma]

Ryouma interjected into the three's conversation, and with the palm of his hand, he touched Michelle's forehead.

"'Antidote'" [Ryouma]

Ryouma filled Michelle's body with the poison-type magic power, neutralizing the poison she had swallowed. After a few seconds, Michelle was able to move her body freely again, so she stood up.

"Fu… Thank you. I'm feeling better already. I was wondering why Ryouma didn't fall, but I guess it was thanks to this, huh?" [Michelle]
"Yes. It's magic meant to remove the effects of poison type magic. Do you feel strange anywhere?" [Ryouma]
"Nope, not at all. Thank you. By the way, Riera and Kanan are?" [Michelle]
"Riera lost consciousness, so she was sent to the clinic just in case." [Elia]
"And Kanan went to accompany her." [Miyabi]
"Then in that case, let's go to the clinic first." [Michelle]
"Right. It'll be better to talk after Riera's woken up too." [Ryouma]

Like this they ended up meeting with Kanan and the others by the clinic. As they began to move out, Ryouma said.

"Ah, sorry about this, but could you all go to the clinic ahead of me? I need to do some light repairs on the training area." [Ryouma]

The wall of earth that Ryouma erected and the magic formation plates that Michelle and the others used to create holes could be seen here and there.

"Then I'll help too. I specialize in earth magic after all." [Michelle]
"let me help too!" [Miyabi]
"You allowed us to use the facility here, so let me help too." [Elia]

Ryouma didn't have any particular reason to refuse them, so he agreed to let the girls help.

After they fixed the area a bit, they went to the clinic.

Chapter 14: Reflection Meeting

After cleaning the area, I went with the others to go the clinic. As I quietly opened the door to the clinic, the first thing I saw was the doctor in charge. After that, eight beds could be seen lined up to the right with only curtains dividing them.

There are healers who use healing magic, but they're generally waiting by a corner of the training area ready to fix an injured person up as soon as they get injured. The patients who normally come here are either people with small wounds or people with big wounds that would take a lot of time to heal even with healing magic. Other than that, the only patients that are sent here are patients like Riera-san who fainted or emergency cases. There are a lot of students who come to the training facility, but the beds here are barely being used.

After asking the doctor where Riera-san was sleeping, we found out that she was sleeping at the bed furthest into the room. We also found out that her consciousness had also already long recovered. I had Elia and the others go first, telling them to call us once it's alright for me and Sebasu-san to enter as well.

"Excuse me. Oh, please don't force yourself." [Ryouma]

As we entered, Riera-san tried to get up, but I stopped her. She did just recover from fainting, so it'd be best for her to remain lying down a little longer.

"Riera-san, is your body ok?" [Ryouma]
"It's alright. I've dealt with something on this level plenty of times during practice with my dad and my older brothers. That aside, how did the match go after I fainted?" [Riera]

I suppose that comes first, huh?

With that, I gave a detail explanation of how I won and how far the three rearguards went.

“I understand. Thank you for the explanation. Ryouma-dono, if you don’t mind, could you please tell us how strong we are?” [Riera]

Riera-san said that as she looked straight at me. The other four were also looking at me, so I gave my thoughts on the match.

“Honestly speaking, you all did far better than expected. Witht more experience, Riera-san’s and Kanan-san’s swordsmanship as well as Elia’s and the other’s magic together should allow you all to form a party with the strength of a D Rank.” [Ryouma]
“Can I hear the reason?” [Riera]
“First, the three rearguards’ magic had sufficient firepower behind them. Especially Elia’s Fire Storm. If that were to hit, then it should be able to deal even with a C Rank magical beast. And even a B Rank magical beast, unless it’s highly resistant to fire, won’t get out unharmed. Unfortunately, the three girls can’t fight in close quarters, and their movements are a lot slower than the other two. Because of that they have to be protected by the two vanguards just like you did in the match just now.” [Ryouma]

Here, I paused for a moment, and then I continued.

“The vanguard, Riera-san, is already strong enough to be a D Rank in my opinion, and Kanan-san could also show plenty of strength with that magic tool of hers. But because they have to protect the three rearguards, they can’t focus on the fight. Moreover, because of that need to protect the backline it’s easy to find one at a disadvantage when fighting multiple opponents. There are humans and even magical beasts that fight in groups after all… Lastly, due to your lack of experience, despite being strong individually and being able to cooperate with each other, there are plenty of openings that can be used. Because of all that, I categorized your group under D Rank.” [Ryouma]

The girls were able to assent after hearing my words. It seems they were actually prepared regarding the matter of their weakness.

“We have a similar opinion actually. We did suffer a lot during the practical tests back in the academy after all.” [Michelle]
“But even when we tried to find a way to fix things, we couldn’t really do much even with a sword on hand.” [Elia]

“And if we can’t focus, the strength of our magic will also decline.” [Miyabi]
“You’re all already plenty good as magicians, so how about stretching yourselves a bit?” [Ryouma]

There’s also the saying that there’s a right person for every job though… And thinking about it again, Miyabi-san is a merchant, Michelle-san is a researcher, and Kanan-san is a magic tool craftsman. And although Elia’s good at magic, she’s the young lady of the duke’s house… The only one that really seems to be really pursuing strength among them is Riera-san who is aspiring to become a knight… Well, in any case, with this they’re at least strong enough to fit a D Rank.

“It’s best not to rush, and just progress at your own pace. You’ve all surprised me plenty in our match just now anyway.” [Ryouma]
“Really?” [Michelle]
“Yes. The two vanguards were strong too, but I was in quite a pinch when Elia sealed my movements with Telekinesis… Oh, right, there was something I wanted to tell you, Elia.” [Ryouma]
“What is it?” [Elia]
“Telekinesis is good at stopping people, but if your control slips, it can be quite dangerous. Especially when you focused on my left arm. If it weren’t for the fact that it was strengthened, my bones would have definitely broken. Also, because it uses up a lot of magic power, it can make you easy to spot even in forests where it’s normally hard to see each other, so please be careful.” [Ryouma]
“Really!? Is your arm alright?” [Elia]

When Elia heard my words, she panicked.

“My arm was strengthened, so there was no problem. Then again, I could’ve just used healing magic if it broke. That aside, weren’t you aware?” [Ryouma]
“We just thought of using Telekinesis last night. Riera didn’t seem to have any problems when we tried it out on her.” [Elia]

So she wasn’t used to it. I guess that’s probably why she almost broke my arm when I resisted, and she ended up using all of her strength.

“I’m really sorry.” [Elia]
“It’s fine so long as you take care when using it against others. Besides, it is still a fairly good way of using it after all. And it’s perfect for someone like you who

struggles with magic control. Aim for the neck in a real battle, and it can become a formidable weapon.” [Ryouma]

By the time I finished saying that, Elia seemed to have finally pulled herself together. Seeing that, I shifted the topic to the magic formation plates.

“That issue aside, I was quite surprised by those plates that had magic formations drawn on them. To think those things could actually have that sort of effect.” [Ryouma]
“I handpicked the ones that might prove to be useful from all my research. They were able to stop you for a moment, but in the end, you were able to find out their weakness.” [Michelle]

I should teach her how to deal with that.

“You can use poison magic, right?” [Ryouma]
“Right. I specialize in earth magic the most, but poison comes next.” [Michelle]
“Can you use ‘Smoke’?” [Ryouma]

‘Smoke’ is an elementary poison magic. It’s a magic that summons a smokescreen to block vision. And no, it doesn’t actually have any poison.

“I can.” [Michelle]
“Then I recommend you use ‘Smoke’ first before throwing your magic formation plates. If you do that, even if your opponent does sense that you threw something filled with magic power, it’ll take him time to find out that what you threw was actually a plate with a magic formation drawn on it. After all, I was only able to come up with a countermeasure after I found out that it was a magic formation that I was dealing with.” [Ryouma]
“Ah~, right. It makes it harder to aim with magic, so I completely forgot about ‘Smoke’. But now that you mention it, it certainly could buy more time.” [Michelle]
“It’s probable. Also, about that ‘Paralyze Mist’ you used at the last moment. There’re magical beasts immune to poison and people that are resistant to it, so it’s best if you refrain from using it. If you’re unlucky, you’ll only end up hurting yourself.” [Ryouma]
“Just like a while ago, right?” [Michelle]

Michelle-san wryly smiled a bit when she said that. Then continuing, she asked.

“Come to think of it, where did you learn that ‘Antidote’ spell? After thinking about it, I realize it’s actually my first time hearing about it… Ah, could it be a secret magic? If so, then I won’t press the issue.” [Michelle]

Antidote is a rare magic, so it seems she’s misunderstanding a bit. It’s magic written in one of the books I inherited from my grandmother, but while it might not be the most common of spells, it’s certainly not a secret magic by any means.

“It’s just something that was mentioned in an old book. It’s not a secret or anything. It utilizes poison attribute magic power by allowing it to fill the body to neutralize the poison and the bad poison magic power. The image is a bit difficult, so whether you can actually use it or not depends on you.” [Ryouma]

It should be fine even if I don’t teach her the preventive magic ‘Vaccine’ for now. That’s an original magic I made based on the ‘Antidote’ magic, so if she can’t use ‘Antidote’, then she won’t be able to learn that either.

“And here I thought it was healing magic. To think that it was actually poison magic. If a chance ever presents itself, I’d like to ask for a rematch.” [Michelle]

Looks like her spirit’s been roused…

As I glanced away from Michelle-san, I saw Riera-san, seemingly deep in thought.

When I did, Riera-san almost immediately noticed my gaze.

“Is there something on my face, Ryouma-dono?” [Riera]
“No, it just seemed like you were thinking of something.” [Ryouma]

When I said that, Riera-san said this with a serious expression on her face.

“Actually, I was thinking of receiving instruction from here during my extended vacation.” [Riera]
“Oh, why all of the sudden? And aren’t you in the middle of a trip right now?” [Ryouma]

Riera-san went quiet for a moment before she slowly began to talk.

“Actually, I was scolded by my brothers just a few days ago…” [Riera]

Apparently, Riera-san met up with her two older brothers who are both

working as knights in the capital in order to study. She did this before leaving for Gimuru. However, right after her short time with them, her brother told her, ‘What on earth have you been doing these past three years?’

“The second son, my older brother, Reole, told me that my skills have gotten duller. He said that the way I am right now, I’m better off just giving up whatever aspirations I have of becoming a knight. The eldest, Riole, on the other hand, said that my skill hadn’t gotten duller, and had in fact gotten better. However, there wasn’t much of a difference compared to how I was three years ago.” [Riera]

Looks like the training at the academy was a lot easier than the training at the Clifford House, so it wasn’t sufficient for Riera-san’s purposes. She doesn’t seem to have lacked in her self-training, but just that and continuous body training for three years with the real training only starting on the fourth… I wonder what kind of training the academy gave them.

“One of the objectives I had in this trip was to try and gain some sort of insight from watching the matches at the arena. I had heard that a tournament was going to open shortly, so I thought a lot of strong people would come…” [Riera]

I see…

“And so after challenging me to a duel, you decided to gain some training here?” [Ryouma]
“Yes. And if you have the time, I’d like to exchange pointers with you again.” [Riera]

Riera-san spoke those words with a steadfast gaze.

I don’t have any particular reason to refuse her. She’s not the type to stir up trouble either… Right! Then I guess I could give her a hand!

“This training facility is open to anyone that seeks training. So long as you apply, you’ll able to receive lessons. I’ll help you as much as I can too. Only… my lessons will be quite strict.” [Ryouma]
“Thank you. A strict teacher is exactly what I want.” [Riera]

As she said that, she went down the bed, stood up, and bowed her head to me.

“Thank you for your guidance and the rigorous training you’ll be giving me from now on. Also, it’s difficult for me to be receiving so much favors, so if there’s anything I can do for you, please feel free to ask.” [Riera]

I think I’ll take her up on that. For starters, how about having her carry some of my luggage? It’ll help build strength too.

After that, the other four also asked to receive training, and I agreed to their request as well.

A little later, Riera-san mentioned that she was feeling better already, so we decided to end the tour here, and go home. I’ve already shown them the places I wanted to show them, and I also need to think of what sort of training I’ll be giving them anyway.

And although I will be training them, I have a job to do tomorrow, so I won’t have time tomorrow. Every week there’ll be two days where I won’t be able to accommodate them due to work and errands, so during those times, I’ll just have them attended the lessons at the training facility.

On the way home in the carriage, I asked them what sort of lessons they wished to take.

“I want to study swordsmanship.” [Riera]
“Do you remember the instructor I talked to before we started our match? That person, Barbet-san, is the one in charge for teaching swordsmanship. He’s a former knight, so I’m sure he’ll do just fine for Riera-san’s training. So with Riera-san receiving Barbet-san’s training, what will the other four be doing?” [Ryouma]
“I want to study fire and ice magic.” [Elia]
“As for me I want fire and poison magic.” [Miyabi]
“For me, I guess I’ll take poison magic after all… But it’s a rare opportunity, so I’d like to learn some other attribute as well…” [Michelle]

Michelle-san seems to be anxious…

“I’d like to learn how to use a twin sword fighting style.” [Kanan]
“There are also lessons for ornament making, but…” [Ryouma]
“It might not be useful for me in the future, but I want to train my fighting abilities just like everyone else. As for ornament making, I’d be grateful if I could just borrow a workshop, and practice by myself.” [Kanan]

If that's what she's decided, then I guess it's fine. I personally would rather that she be able to keep her good eyes after all.

"I've decided!" [Michelle]

Oh, so Michelle-san's decided?

"I'll study all the magic attributes while focusing on earth and poison magic!" [Michelle]
"You want to take lessons in all magic attributes?" [Ryouma]
"Yep. Actually, I have all magic attribute affinity, but my specialty so far only involves earth and poison magic. And then I've dabbled a little in wind and fire magic. It's not possible to study more than three attributes back in the academy, so I'd like to study them while I have the chance." [Michelle]

When I asked her if the school had such a rule, she replied with an 'of course'. Because of the limits in magic power, studying more than one attribute would result in less practice overall, requiring more time before one is able to reach mastery.

I forgot about that issue because I don't have that sort of problem. In my case, the problem is more in exhausting my magic power. My magic power is really big, so it's not easy to exhaust it all even if I want to.

When I said that, everyone's gaze except for Eli and Sebasu grew a little cold.

"Ryouma-kun says the same thing Elia does." [Kanan]
"In the world of magicians, magicians would normally go to a labyrinth to speed up their magic recovery, while the nobles would use magic recovery potions, but with these two…" [Riera]
"Must be nice having such luxurious worries." [Miyabi]
"Elia aside, Ryouma-kun, just how much magic power do you have? Last night, Elia mentioned you having magic power similar to hers three years ago. And since you were able to push back her Telekinesis, you must definitely have magic power proportionate to hers." [Michelle]

As I wryly smiled at the other four's words, I answered.

"It's about 280,000." [Ryouma]
"280,000!?": [Kanan]

“Isn’t it bigger than mine now!?” [Elia]
“I put up the buildings and the roads we passed through, and I also practiced and researched on my magic a lot, so I’ve always been using it to the limits. When I had some left over, I would just release the magic power.” [Ryouma]

The released magic power would then be feed for the slimes, so it wasn’t wasted.

Elia was proud to hear that I had increased my magic power, but the other four were so shocked, their facial expressions stopped moving. As for Sebasu-san, he already knew of my magic power, so he was taking it quite calmly.

A little while after that, the conversation fully shifted to magic, and then eventually, the lessons that I teach.

“Ryouma-kun, you’re also an instructor, right? What do you teach?” [Kanan]
“Is it swordsmanship after all?” [Riera]
“Or maybe magic?” [Michelle]
“Ah… Actually, as of now, it’s neither. In the past, I would teach either, but with the increase in instructors, I don’t teach anymore. Nowadays, I’m mostly only called to break the noses of some arrogant students that either came from some other place, have some sort of ability, or just simply grew arrogant after some time. I mostly just help around nowadays when called. The last time I participated in a match at the training facility was actually two months ago.” [Ryouma]

Arrogant students are put in place to remind them of their inexperience by having them repeat a match where they are defeated over and over again. The knights of this country do the same thing. But of course, It’s not good to hurt them too much.

There might be healing magic to deal with their physical injuries, tbut he agony and the fatigue left behind by the pain in their minds won’t be erased. Because of that there are students who, after being beaten and healed over and over, have their mind break along with their nose, causing them to come out scared.

All the instructors take care not to psychologically scar the students, so there’re barely any such cases. But the training is harsh, so there’ve been quite a number of students that were driven away.

We don’t forcefully keep students that don’t want to continue anymore, so nothing exactly is stopping them from leaving. But if possible, I’d like to see them all finish the curriculum… Oops, not good, I’m digressing again.

“As of now, I provide lessons on how to make a magic staff once a week. Do any of you wish to take it? You’ll know whether a staff is good or bad, and there are also parts related to magic, so I’m sure the knowledge you gain will serve you well.” [Ryouma]

As the five of them were interested, it was decided that they’ll attend the next session on magic staff making. As we approached the town, Elia suddenly remembered something as she said.

“Ryouma-san, won’t you participate in the arena?” [Elia]
“Ryouma-dono, you’re good at sword and magic, so surely, you must’ve also dreamt of winning a championship at an arena, right?” [Riera]

It’s because I don’t actually have any interest in championships… Eh? Wait, isn’t Riera-san misunderstanding something?

“Riera-san. Could it be that you think that the tournament being held is to compare one’s skill in sword or magic?” [Ryouma]
“Is that not it? It’s a tournament, so I figured it would be a martial arts tournament, but…” [Riera]
“The tournament being held this time is a tournament between conjurers and slave demon magicians. Contests of martial arts and magic are common, so to do something different, the management of the arena gathered the people of the tamer guild.” [Ryouma]

I’ve broken relations with the tamer guild, so naturally, I wasn’t notified. I only found out when I went to the arena to check on my store.

“Oh…” [Riera]
“Well there’re no cons to learning about the ecology of magical beasts, right? You definitely won’t be wasting your time.” [Ryouma]

As I encouraged Riera-san, who was feeling rather down, we arrived at Gimuru. We passed by the gate, and handed in the girls’ application for the training facility, and then I distributed the permit to enter the facility to everyone. With this, the girls will now be able to take lessons from the facility.

Incidentally, Sebasu-san will be teaching water magic to the students while the girls are taking their lessons.

After that, I saw Elia and the others to their lodging.

“Ryouma-san, thank you very much for today.” [Elia]
“You’re welcome. Let’s meet again the day after tomorrow.” [Ryouma]

I dropped the girls in front of their lodging, and then headed back home with Rai. Tomorrow’s sure gonna be a busy day…

Chapter 15: Ryouma’s Busy Day

I woke up when the light was still dim and the sun had yet to rise to train my body lightly. After that, I ate my breakfast, and then I took the Big Space Slime that can use dimension magic with me to a room in the house… Although it was within my house, the distance we had to travel was quite far.

It’s because I built a lot of facilities for experimenting as well as to house my slimes and help me use up my magic power each day. The lot size is about 150 hectares, but as of now, I’ve already used up over half of the mountain range.

Also, although I say “use”, all I really did was change the tunnels that were already there into a number of square-shaped rooms. The build of the facilities I created were all plain and simple. Save for the facilities that are being used for experiments, the rooms werwe mostly storage rooms.

Another exception would be the tunnels by the sides of the house I built when I first started living at the mine. I figured the students might use the training facilities there back then, so I designed the rooms there better than the others.

Deep inside those training facilities is a goblin farm. There are eight big rooms that are connected to passageways that can be closed and opened. Four of those are rooms are inhabited by 200 goblins each, totaling to 800 goblins. These goblins are fed, and when their population grows, the surplus is used as food for the slimes or as experimental subjects.

Even deeper past the breeding grounds are two demarcations. One is for experimenting and another for manufacturing. And then lastly, there’s the field. So there’s a workshop for me to experiment and create things, and then there’s also a place for me to store ingredients and completed products.

Also, around the fields there’s another group of goblins that’s different from the ones I’m breeding. I made a deal with these goblins to let them live by the fields in exchange for their service in doing some easy work around the fields, as

well as gathering the crops.

I also tried raising orcs in the past, but unfortunately, although their sexual desire was strong, they couldn't multiply quickly. Moreover, although they were strong, they refused to listen to orders.

I know it's a little questionable to have the goblins work for me and at the same time have them serve as feeds, but I've already killed a lot of goblins. And I'll also have to kill goblins if my adventurer work requires it, so something like, "Let's not kill goblins again!" is not something I can say.

That's why I thought I should at least make the living environment of the goblins that are working better. Because of that, I've been mostly feeding them the food from the fields. And when it's not enough, I even go out of my way to buy some leafy vegetables from the market at the town, and feed that to them. I also get some wine for them once a week. I also make sure to give the goblins that are meant for breeding enough to eat. They can live with just a little food, but I do my best to ensure they have their fill.

"We're here." [Ryouma]

The place we arrived at is a corner in the manufacturing area where the products to be brought out are stored. By the corner of this storeroom are king grave slimes that have stored the corpses of goblins that has already had their blood drained. The king grave slimes are about the size of two drums even when compressed, so they can still be seen through the gaps in between the luggage.

"First comes the paper used in the research facilities and the vitamin pills. Then the dried corn used for making popcorn at the store by the arena… the potatoes, the onions, the sesame seeds… the bamboo, the iron, and the cursed ornaments… Ok." [Ryouma]

I put the items in the storeroom into the Dimension Home and the Item Box. I also borrowed the help of the big space slime. After I finished getting the things I needed, I took the big space slime and the king grave slime with me, and we headed for the research facility.

As we entered the town, we stopped by a slime research facility at the back of the training facility.

In front of me is a triangular building surrounded by 4m tall walls. It looked like a fortress. The building is about three stories high.

The walls being high is a requirement by the law for magical beast research facilities inside a town. It's to ensure the safety of the citizens living nearby.

Moreover, this building is situated 30m away from the surrounding buildings. That empty space is covered by a park. The security is made to be lax as the park is also open to the public. Nothing can be done about the height of the walls, so at the very least, the security was lightened to allow the citizens visiting the park to be able to relax.

As I greeted the security of the facility, I entered into the research facility, and stopped by the receptionist's desk where an old man was waiting for me.

"Good morning. Sorry for making you wait." [Ryouma]
"Good morning, Chief." [Old Man]

The man who is bowing deeply right in front of me is Paul Bilkins. He is the man responsible for managing the researchers of the slime research facility. He is able to immediately comprehend the things I teach him, allowing him to immediately distribute the work to his subordinates, gather the results, and report to me everything in detail.

Also, because I also have other stores to deal with, I'm more the investor and advisor of this research facility rather than a manager.

The first thing to be done after arriving here is the matter regarding the things that I've brought. The reception's desk that we are at now is the lowest part of this triangular building. Going left from here leads to the laboratory that studies the practical applications of the slimes. Going right leads to the lab that studies unknown slimes.

I handed the paper and the goblin feeds to the person in charge of their storerooms.

There are few amongst the researchers who can contract a large number of slimes like me, so they can't have the slimes fuse together and become a big version or a huge version to save on food costs. That's why a majority of the goblins I'm breeding are being consumed by the research facility.

The reason I'm able to contract a large number of slimes is because Gayn and the others set my talent in slave magic to adapt to my interests. I'm extremely interested in slimes, so my talent in slave magic adapted itself for slime contracts. Thanks to that, I'm able to contract what is pretty much an infinite number of slimes.

But I can also contract with other beasts, and am often told that I'm better than the common man at it. Also, according to Gayn, I'm apparently compatible with magical beasts that have a tendency for crowding together. I'm also compatible with magical beasts that are weak individually.

When I asked Kufo why, he said, "Weren't you always bad with people back in your previous life? Then isn't your affinity something that came about because of your admiration for those that are able to form bonds with crowds?" His words hit right at the heart of the matter of how I thought back in my previous life, so I couldn't deny it at all. I've always been envious of people who could get together happily with other people after all.

Being told the truth with no malice behind it is a lot more painful than some poorly made lie. It was also in the middle of the banquet when I was told that, so I ended up drinking more liquor than normal. I couldn't get drunk at all though…

Going back to the topic…

My job isn't only to transport the goods to the storeroom.

"Here are the documents since last week——" [Researcher 1]
"Oil Slime, Wax Slime, Mold Slime, and Copy Slime. These four types of slimes all possess the ability to generate lubricant liquid. We compared the liquids they produced, and as expected, although they all possess the same Lubricant Liquid Generate skill, the characteristics of the liquid produced varies per type. Also, the abilities exhibited of two slimes of the same type apparently vary depending on the food they are fed before evolution. For example——" [Researcher 2]
"The slime evolutions are really varied. We are currently in the process of drawing up a tree-chart for their evolution——" [Researcher 3]
"We've discovered another new slime!" [Researcher 4]

I took the opportunity to go around the laboratories, receiving the reports of people as I did. The bureau director, Paul, has also written it down in the

document he gave me, but I also wanted to see the actual results myself.

“Another one? There sure has been a lot of new slimes lately.” [Ryouma]

I looked at the slime that was presented before me. This slime had just evolved, so the research surrounding it has only just begun as well. From the outside, it looks no different from a normal slime, so I used my Monster Identify skill.

Skill Name	Level
Digestion	Lv 4
Absorption	Lv 3
Split	Lv 2

Oh, a jelly slime…

Wait a moment, just how on earth did they distinguish it from the others!!?

“…It’s rather difficult to distinguish from other slimes from just the appearance. What did you feed it?” [Ryouma]

Slimes can look similar to each other despite being a different variant, so it’s quite troubling…

“We fed it the bones of magical beasts and animals. We were looking to see if there were any other evolutions aside from the acid slime and the bone slime, and the result is this, the Jelly Slime.” [Researcher 4]

It probably evolved from the collagen inside the bones.

When this research facility was first founded, the first researches that were done were based mostly on my findings, which stated that slimes evolved differently depending on the food they ate. (At this time, the researchers in the facility were only the people working at the laundromat)

But then when the researchers tried it out, they were able to evolve slimes of different variants despite feeding them the same food. For example, slimes that were fed bones evolved into either an acid slime or a bone slime. And today,

there’s even the jelly slime.

While it seems it’s possible to make the slimes evolve, directing the slimes’ evolution with 100% certainty is quite difficult.

To make matters worse, a large number of variants can apparently transform into the same type. A good example would be the slimes inside the monster carriage, the heater slime and the cooler slime, as either of those two slimes can transform into an aircon slime.

This diversity in the evolution path of the slimes is one of the causes of the researchers’ headaches.

Still… A jelly slime, huh? It’s probably going to be used for food…

“As one would expect, the jelly in the jelly slime is the same jelly that’s eaten. I’ve heard that jelly is generally made out of animal bones.” [Researcher 4]
“It’s the collagen from inside the bones of animals. That ingredient is heated, which then turns it into gelatin, which is then used as the main ingredient for jellies.” [Ryouma]

Well… gelatin isn’t only used in sweets though.

As I was thinking that, Paul talked to me.

“So you really don’t want to see slimes used as food ingredients.” [Paul]
“Not really. It’s not like they’ll die anyway, so it’s fine.” [Ryouma]

The meat slime that Caulkins-san evolved in the past is also present in this research facility. It’s a slime that evolved after being fed the meat of magical beasts continuously.

The meat slime has two abilities, Change Meat Quality and Remember Meat Quality, allowing them to transform into a meat with similar quality to that of the meat they ate. The meat can be taken from them without killing them so long as their nucleus is left untouched. They can also regenerate their body so long as they don’t eat poisoned meat. They can do this even with meat not consumable by people. It takes about two weeks for them to regenerate completely.

Although I’ve been hunting other prey, I was a bit hesitant to use the meat

slimes as food at first. But then I found out that the meat slime apparently doesn't feel any pain from it, so nowadays, I'm not really against it anymore. It's also better to just eat the meat that's already been gathered so as not to waste it.

"Not at all. It's because you don't see them like we do. You see them as your family or your friends, and not just as research subjects, so it probably can't be helped. It's also because of that that you have a different point of view regarding slimes, right? We couldn't even think of any other use for the meat slime other than for food supply… It was truly shameful on our part then." [Paul]

As soon as they found out that the meat slime's meat could be eaten, the researchers all thought to breed and study them in that light. But because I was against the idea of using them as food, I fed them the muscle of magical beasts, had them change their meat quality, and with the help of the bone slime, I found out that it was possible to use them to supplement muscles that weakened due to age.

The effects were huge, and people became able to move like they did in their younger days. Because of that a lot of people helped out in the experiments. The researchers all thought to use the meat slimes for food at first, but that's probably because they're still affected by the values of the research facility they worked at before.

"Because the perspective is different——" [Ryouma]
"N-No Ah AHHHHHHH!!!" [Girl's Voice]

While I was in the middle of talking, a girl's screaming voice suddenly reached our ears, cutting my speech midway. Her scream was so loud it must've reached the entire facility. Of course, Paul, me, as well as everyone else in the surrounding area stopped in our tracks.

"This voice…" [Ryouma]
"It's Alicia again!" [Paul]
"For the meantime, let's follow the direction of her voice!" [Ryouma]

We knew who it was as soon as we heard the voice. The owner of that voice was none other than the famous trouble maker of a female researcher, Alicia. She was the type to cause trouble wherever she went. And not because of ill will

or anything, but because she's merely unlucky. It's not on purpose, so she doesn't get punished, but…

"Just what is it this time, I wonder." [Paul]
"Well for the meantime, let's hurry." [Ryouma]

If I recall correctly… The first trouble she caused was when she tried to confirm my findings, and she tried feeding the slime rotten foods to turn it into a scavenger slime. But the result she got instead was that of a mold slime that ate molds. As a result, mold grew all over the storerooms in the laboratories.

Then the last trouble she caused was when she fed the slimes bamboo charcoal, and discovered the carbon slime. But then that carbon slime spit out powdered carbon, causing a dust explosion inside the facility… After the mold slime incident, we put her inside a room that couldn't be entered in order to prevent casualties, but apparently, that backfired on us.

Fortunately, the explosion was small, and because Alicia-san was taken aback from the carbon slime spitting powdered carbon, she inadvertently took some distance, allowing her to get by with only some wounds. However, because of the loud noise from the explosion, everyone inside the facility went into an uproar. Moreover, the windows in the laboratories were blown away and the other slimes were damaged so badly you they were pretty much wiped out.

We headed to Alicia-san's lab as I recalled those things. By the time we got there, a crowd had already formed, and was being kept in check. When we went through that crowd to take a look at the situation, what we saw were the cramping faces of the security.

"Is anyone injured!?" [Ryouma]

As I said that in a loud voice, the crowd immediately parted, opening a way for us. At the end of that path was a guard who answered my question.

"Just two researchers who fainted. There's no danger to their life. There's also no danger as of now." [Guard]
"That's good to hear… What's the cause of all this?" [Ryouma]
"…If you take a look inside, you'll understand." [Guard]

Just as the guard had said, I took a peek inside the room, and I immediately

understood the reasoning behind that scream a while ago as even my face couldn’t help but cramp.

Yeah… if it’s something like this, you’d definitely want to scream…

Chapter 16: Ryouma's Busy Day 2

TL Note: Lure Prey -> Lure Carnivore.

The scene inside the room was nothing short of shocking.

Bugs of all sorts were crawling all over the walls and the ceiling. Now, I may not be that bad with insects, but with these many, even I can't help but feel sick.

To make things worse, amongst the many insects crawling in the lab, one of them was that dreaded insect that was feared even in my world, the cockroach! And not a paltry number either! Of course the girls wound faint! In fact, with this many even a guy would scream! But, hmm… why did something like this happen I wonder.

"U-Ugh…" [Alicia]
"Alicia-san! Have you come to?" [Ryouma]
"T-The insects… Huh? The insects…" [Alicia]

Amongst the two fainted girls, Alicia-san appears to be the first to regain her consciousness.

"Are you alright?" [Ryouma]
"The guards entered the lab when you fainted, and brought you guys out." [Paul]
"Thank you… for saving me." [Alicia]

Alicia bowed her head toward the security guards as she offered a word of gratitude.

"So… how did things come to this? If I recall correctly, you should be currently researching on the fluff slime and other plant-type slimes, correct?" [Ryouma]

Her face went pale as soon as I asked her that. Looks like she remembered.

"I was feeding and observing the slimes that preferred to eat vegetables as always when a sticky slime began to evolve, so I went to see what food it liked.

But then just as I was in the process of studying it, insects suddenly poured in through the windows and the ventilation that were added since the last incident… I lost consciousness shortly afterwards.” [Alicia]

Upon hearing her story, I steeled myself, and entered the insect infested laboratory.

The slime was seated on the observing pedestal with countless insects swarming it.

The windows were open and even the door I entered from was open, yet the insects refused to leave… Chances are this slime is the reason behind this invasion. Still… I must say… this slime looks awfully disgusting. It looks just like the other slimes, but because of its high transparency, I can see the insects that it’s swallowed wriggling inside it as it digests them.

As I looked at that slime, I used Monster Identify.

Skill Name	Level
Sticky Liquid	Lv3
Lure Insects	Lv3
Digestion	Lv4
Absorption	Lv3
Split	Lv1

The moment I saw its stats, it was clear that the slime was the reason behind this incident.

“The Lure Insects skill… Yep, this is definitely the culprit. This skill should be the same type as the Lure Carnivores skill of the takeostrich and the Lure Ghosts skill of the grave slime. Oh, right… this slime used to be a sticky slime… I did use the sticky slimes like a flypaper in the past… And this one eats just like one.”Taking a better look at the lab, I can see some insectivorous plants. I guess that’s what it must’ve eaten then.I asked Alicia-san to confirm, and apparently, those plants really are what she fed it. In any case, it would appear that there’re no problems

aside from the insects.

I informed the security and the researchers outside that everything was safe now, and they all went back to their respective jobs as they heaved sighs of relief.

The people working at this lab are all making troubled faces though. In that case, it might be a good idea to concoct some insect repellant for them. Alternatively, I could also have some mosquito screens put up.

“W-Well for the meantime, it seems useful for pest control. There are plenty of interesting points to study though. Such as the effects on the useful insects, and whether it can resist against magical beasts despite being an insect-type.” [Ryouma]
“I’ll prepare a report as soon as we finish investigating.” [Lab Manager]
“Thank you very much. Also please make sure to tend to the two injured girls.” [Ryouma]
“Please leave it to me.” [Lab Manager]
“Then, please come this way.” [Paul]

After the matter, I left everything to Alicia-san’s lab manager, and left with Paul-san.

The place we were headed to was the area above the reception desk, to one of the several small conference rooms. As we entered the rectangular room, what first entered our eyes was a big window that could be seen outside, covered by a thick curtain. On the left was space for documents to be posted – for announcing them – and on the right was an aquarium in which slimes of various sizes swam.

“I’ll bring the documents. Please wait here for a moment.” [Paul]

As Paul-san said that, he left the conference room. In the meantime, I decided to watch the slimes swimming in the aquarium as I waited.

The slimes swimming inside the aquarium are a type known as the Fin Slime. It’s a kind of slime that evolved from eating fishes. Half a year after I opened a laundromat at Skoom, the hometown of the Bridge of Skoom – an adventurer

party I know from way back – the employees that I sent there in their hometown to tend to the store as well as research discovered this slime.

The members of the Bridge of Skoom all work as adventurers to provide for their families' unstable life that depended on their catch for the day. Despite that, however, they all still had their own responsibilities regarding fishing work. Which as a result led to them having good relations with plenty of the fishermen in the town.

It was through the good graces of the Bridge of Skoom that I was able to put up my store in that town, and have plenty of customers through the fishermen who dropped by every day. Moreover, some of the researchers I'd sent also apparently knew some of those fishermen, so because of that, they would drink together from time to time, and the fishermen would even sometimes give them some of their catch that could not make the quality check. They got along really well in other words.

Because of that, the researchers were able to feed the slimes saw-edged perch every day. And before they knew it, the slime evolved into the fin slime.

Unfortunately, although they had been hoping for a slime that could create fish meat, the fin slime was merely a small slime with fins and gills of various sizes. It couldn't be eaten, and it didn't have the strength to carry things or pull boats either. Its body wouldn't grow even after feeding it more fish, and neither could a fish slime be born.

As of now, the only use we could find for the fin slime was that of entertainment. It doesn't swim fast. It swims at a leisurely pace, and couple that with the different colors and sizes of its fins, there are many who thinks of it as cute or interesting, so they're quite popular in the lab for being soothing.

Because of that there are aquariums filled with fin slimes all over the laboratory. There are aquariums on the other conference rooms too. And there's also a big one in the dining hall in the third floor. And then there's also one in the guest room and the reception desk. And then there are also people who keep aquariums in their labs.

The fin slimes generally prefer being in the water, but they're not fishes, so they can still live on land. Lately, people have been building hills and land in their

aquariums. And then they would put their aquariums by the window, letting sunlight shine on the aquarium. After which, some of the fin slimes would then climb the hills they made, and sunbathe under the sun's light. Watching the fin slimes sunbathe has become really popular amongst the researchers lately.

The fin slimes just might become a huge hit in the near future.

"Excuse me. I've brought some tea." [Employee]
"Thank you very much." [Ryouma]

Tea was served, so I sat down, and drank as I waited. After a while, Paul came in with two other men, a bundle of papers in their arms. They sat themselves by the same four-sided table that I was sitting by.

In front of me was Paul-san. To the left was a man in the prime of his life, wearing armor, Crank-san. And to the right was a slender man wearing a pair of glasses who was in his thirties, Pete-san. He is the manager of this research facility, and is usually the one who handles its funds.

I go here once a week to hear the reports of these three men. From Paul-san, the results of the slime research, from Crank-san, issues regarding the facility's security, and from Pete-san, a general report regarding the operation of the facility. The meeting is quite long, so we usually eat lunch together as we discuss things.

Paul-san wanted feeds from distant areas to be imported for use in research. Following that, Pete-san gave a report on the costs needed to make that happen.

Crank-san's report was mostly on minor issues. Issues such as arguments from people arguing on the use of a slime or so… There was nothing that couldn't be solved with some good mediation, so save for the earlier incident, there were no pressing issues to attend.

As the meeting continued, we came to our last topic.

"Now on the last topic we have to discuss today… Are you aware of the magic beast tournamnet that will be held in the arena?" [Paul]
"I've heard of it." [Ryouma]

As I said that, Paul wordlessly and deeply nodded.

“The participation conditions include B Rank magical beasts, so the cannonball rhino can participate. But I’d also like for you to consider having the slimes participate too.” [Paul]
“If the opponents are B Rank magical beasts, then the only ones who could put up a fight are the big variations up.” [Ryouma]

I’ve already revealed most of my findings to the researchers of the facility, so they’re already aware that big slimes are an aggregation of many slimes. However, this fact is yet to be publicized.

The matters of this research facility is being kept confidential, so I make sure to avoid doing anything eye-catching in public. When a big slime is needed, I have the slimes shorten the transformation time by having them use the compress skill. At the same time, I also have them slip into other slimes to hide the transformation. The only ones who are in the know regarding the big slime’s secrets are the people of the Jamil Household, Raypin-san and the other adventurers, and the rest of the people I trust. And of course, they’re keeping a tight lid on it as well.

We’ve been planning to announce the results of our research to the public once we find a good opportunity, but… has the time already come? At the very least, it seems that Paul-san wants to use the magic beast tournamnet to announce our progress. In any case, I better ask what I need to ask… Although, he’s probably already prepared for this.

“How much are you planning to reveal? And have you completed your preparations?” [Ryouma]
“Only the big slime. The evolution conditions and the practical applications of slime will remain confidential. The announcement of the results of slime research should be announced slowly and carefully. The documents have already been prepared. The people who will be explaining and demonstrating has also already been chosen.” [Paul]

Paul-san spoke fluently, without the slightest pause, but then he asked me a question.

“…But is it really alright for you not to announce it yourself? All we did was verify your findings. The one who unveiled the mystery behind the ecology and

contract of the big slime which had eluded countless researchers was you, Takebayashi-sama.” [Paul]
“Please announce it as the results of the research facility. I have other jobs to do.” [Ryouma]

Hearing that, Paul-san couldn’t help but sigh to himself as he shrugged his shoulders.

While I won’t say that acknowledgement doesn’t bring me happiness, my goal in my research is neither glory nor fame. That’s why I’d rather let other people handle the public. And besides, all sorts of trouble would come if I were to announce it as my own.

“I understand. We will take responsibility for the publication and announcement of the research.” [Paul]
“Thank you. I’d like to ask though, why now?” [Ryouma]
“First, because the magic beast tournament is a good place to announce that it is now possible to contract with the big slimes. And second, because if our research lab can accomplish not just to unveil the ecology and contract method of the big slime, but even win with it, then the achievements that our research facility will gain will be huge!” [Paul]

Paul continued.

“Showing the big slime in the tournament will attract a lot of attention from slave demon magic users and other related people. If they ask for the particulars, then we can just have them inquire the facility. What’s more is that we’ll be able to pile up achievements. If we can pile up achievements, then we should somehow be able to gain some sort of benefit from it. But unfortunately, we are only researchers, fighting is outside of our expertise, so…” [Paul]
“Unless the slime fights in an annoying way, the slime won’t have much of a chance to a win.” [Crank]

According to the information from the previous tournament, while the magical beasts will be treated when injured, it’s not something that can guarantee the safety of the magical beasts. It’s the same for the tournaments meant for people, but the chance for injury or death isn’t zero. If an inexperienced slime were to fight, then it might just suffer grave injuries.

“If the championship could be won, then the value of someone such as ourselves who is affiliated will also increase. And Takebayashi-sama, if you win, you will also gain the prize money. Over half the costs of this facility is currently being covered by you, so it’s most likely a small sum to you, but… Pete.” [Paul]

At Paul-san’s call, Pete-san continued.

“The prize money is 50,000 suits. That’s more than enough for a person to get by without working for a year.” [Pete]

While it’s certainly a lot of money, with the laundromat stores currently totaling to about 10, the current income of the stores altogether reaches to about 200,000 suits daily.

And while I’m not able to use that entire sum due to the construction expenses – as I am no longer building the branches myself, and mostly left with people… Moreover, with the money being spent to improve the working environment of the employees, and a chunk of it being deposited in the bank in case of emergency, the spendable income I have is actually only about 20% of that 200,000. But even then that’s still 40,000 suits daily, so the prize money just doesn’t look attractive to me.

I’ve spent a lot of my income in investing on the training facilities, training areas, research facilities, and employees, but I still have 50 big gold coins, which totals to about 5,000,000 suits saved up. That’s why I have no problem at all in regards to money… If there’s anything I’m worried about, it’s preventing information leaks.

As I was about to ask Crank-san, he replied before I could say anything.

“We currently have 30 guards and crime prevention magic tools installed. If we were to ask for support from the training facility, we can increase that to 50. We could also talk to Gimuru’s guards before the tournament.” [Crank]

If they’re people from the training facility, then it should be safe. We also have good relations with the Gimuru’s guards because of the training facility, so they’ll definitely listen if we were to ask them to be vigilant when patrolling.

“Things might get noisy after the information regarding the big slime is revealed to the public. And with the slimes currently able to create food and help

out in manufacturing and other industrial processes, it might be a necessity to acquire a good social standing for the facility, and increase our influence.” [Paul]

We can just release the information normally. but right now this research facility is unknown. It doesn’t have an amazing title such as “national” attached to it, and neither does it have any sort of achievement. To put things briefly, it doesn’t have any sort of brand, so it’s easy to look down on.

It’s sponsored by the Jamil Household, so while they may not be able to openly speak out against us, if we were to continue like this without any sort of achievements whatsoever, people might talk behind our back and say that we’re only using our influence with the Jamil Household.

And if we’re continued to be looked down on, nasty people might come once we start talking about the practical uses of slimes. That’s why it’s a good idea to pile up some achievements with the big slime at the magic beast tournament. After all, there are definitely people who make their decisions after seeing one’s title and achievements.

With that in mind, if the big slime were to make a flashy appearance in the arena, then the appeal in being able to contract with the big slime should also increase. But that’s not all.

If for argument’s sake, we decided not to make an appearance at the magic beast tournament, then if we wanted to reveal information regarding the big slime, we would have to bring a thesis to a research facility or academic conference somewhere. But if we just went up and showed the big slime at the magic beast tournament, then the inquiry will come pouring in from their side, and we won’t have to go anywhere.

With that, the time it takes will be greatly reduced, and the position we have in the discussion will be better. I am, after all, also a researcher, and I’d rather not sell the information on the slimes cheaply. Having a position where I am able to refuse divulging information I don’t want to release is best.

As I ascertained that it would be best for us to gain some achievements, I came to the conclusion that it would be best to participate in the magic beast tournament.

“…I understand. Let’s participate in the magic beast tournament.” [Ryouma]

Like this my participation in the magic beast tournament was decided.

Chapter 17: Ryouma’s Busy Day 3

After it was decided for me to participate in the magic beast tournament, the meeting ended.

I handed the vitamins I brought from my house to Paul and the others, and left the distribution to them. Then after I received the vinyl bags (used for the crushed ice in my store by the arena) and a bundle of rectangular paper with the mark of the slime on them, they sent me off, and I left the research facility.

The next place I’m headed to is the training facility. If you walk straight ahead from the entrance of the research facility, there’s a backdoor leading to the courtyard and the entrance used for transporting goods.

Everything except for the pillar was removed in that area to allow carriages to pass through, so it feels similar to the area under the girders of a railway or a highway.

As I entered from that backdoor, and into the courtyard, what greeted me was the figure of the merchant guild’s guildmaster watching over some kids.

“You’re quite late today.” [Grisela]
“Sorry. I made you wait.” [Ryouma]
“It’s fine, it’s my rest day today anyway. That aside, why don’t you go ahead and settle your business here.” [Grisela]

The guild master of the merchant guild, Grisela-san, has been living here in the training facility since half a year ago. In here, she’s not a guild master, but just a grandmother who’s watching over the children. So when she’s here, she’s just Granny Gri.

The reason she ended up living here all started because of one particular day half a year ago when I went to the merchant guild, and received some tea from her.

It was then that I found out for the first time that Granny Gri had been living in the nap room provided for the guild master, and hadn't been coming home at all. Although she might have had a big house in the residential district of Gimuru, it was mostly being taken care of by a person she hired.

She didn't have any relatives there, so even if she did come home, she'd still be alone, so she's always been staying at the guild is what Granny Gri said when I asked her about it.

It finally made sense to me when I heard that.

Granny Gri was almost always at the guild whenever I dropped by. There were plenty of times when I couldn't meet her right away because of a guest or a meeting, but that's all. There's never been any other reason for me to be unable to meet her. She was always at the guild, and she always made time for me whenever I visited… it struck me as a bit odd then, but it never occurred to me that she lived in the guild.

We talked a bit more after that. And since it just cost her money to have a house and have someone watch over it, it was decided that she'll be moving to the training facility.

The people of the merchant guild were grateful when they found out. Apparently, the employees of the guild were also worrying about Granny Gri. But because of her age, they figured it was still better than her coming home just to be alone since at least with her there, someone could attend to her if something were to happen.

The training facility has plenty of people in the dorms, and there're even doctors amongst the employees, so it was a lot more reassuring to have Granny Gri stay there. I went to help move Granny Gri's things from her house, but surprisingly, there were people from the guild who came to help as well. They even bowed their heads to me in gratitude.

Nowadays, Granny Gri would watch the children on her rest days. She would also teach math and how to read from time to time.

"Oi, what are you spacing out for? Let's go." [Grisela]
"Ah, right!"

I headed to the storeroom with Granny Gri, and left the paper with the slime mark on it that I just got from the research facility. In exchange, I took the paper bags that had the slime mark imprinted on them.

“This is quite a lot.” [Ryouma]
“It’s because the kids are full of spirit and are competing with each other.” [Grisela]
“I’ll have to thank them later. Ah, should I bring them some sweets?” [Ryouma]
“They’ll be delighted.” [Grisela]

After that short conversation, I started gathering things again.

The children help out with light chores around the facility such as drawing water and sweeping. Amongst those light chores, one of the jobs they do is the production of these paper bags. It was me who suggested that the children do these light chores.

The paper bags they make are used in the store by the arena, so their work doesn’t go to waste. And the kids are really happy when I praise them when we meet. I wonder what I should make as thanks this time. Cookies are fine, but… Well, I think I’ll take my time thinking about it later.

After I finished gathering everything, I exited the storeroom, and went to a room, where I chatted with Granny Gri for a while as we drank some tea. It’s already become a habit for me to take a break from anywhere between 30 minutes to an hour like this after gathering all the paper bags.

After we talked about the news of some historic ruins being discovered in a forest called Resaruba, we began to talk about my participation in the magic beast tournament. Granny Gri is a trustworthy partner of mine, so after we talked about the details that led to me participating, she encouraged me, saying, “Go win!” After which, Granny Gri said this.

“Don’t you think it’d be a good idea to make your own guild soon?” [Grisela]
“By guild you mean something like the merchant guild?” [Ryouma]
“Right. If you were to make a slime guild and partner with the merchant guild, it’ll be hard for others to meddle with your matters. And I’m sure the merchant guild will readily agree as soon as they hear about your slimes.” [Grisela]

Ahh, so there was that method too… But how do you even make a guild? I

tried to ask that, but Granny Gri was already lost in her prattling.

“Isn’t it great having such a high production rate? It can be troublesome when you just make things as you please, but if you were to properly use that productivity, the price of goods can be reduced. For example, food. When the harvest is bad, the price of food increases. And although it’s slight, the effect on the people can be big. Moreover, an imprudent fellow could buy up the supply, and then sell them for… well, you understand, right?” [Grisela]

I think you said everything already though…

“When all the supplies are bought, shortage will come, and the prices will rise. Because of that, there’re people who won’t be able to afford their own share. And that’s where the slimes come in, right?” [Slime]
“Exactly. Fortunately, however, this country is rich. So even small villages should have some reserve stock. But with your slime, they’ll be able to get by before using that all up.” [Grisela]
“And since that’ll be sold at the right price, the others who are selling at a higher price will have to sell lower if they want to sell at all.” [Ryouma]
“Even if the price jump isn’t fully mitigated, enough food reaching the people is more than satisfactory. As you can see, I’m already an old woman. In this long life that I’ve lived, I watched how the imprudent took advantage of others plenty of times… I can’t forgive them. That sort of unethical practice.” [Grisela]

While I don’t know for sure what it was that Grisela-san was thinking, the last words she said were heavy.

“…There’s that method as well. In any case, it’s good enough for you to keep this in your mind for now. You need some achievements before being able to put up a guild anyway, so your course of action hasn’t really changed.” [Grisela]
“Really?” [Ryouma]
“But of course. You didn’t really think you’d be able to make a guild so easily, did you? There’re plenty of things needed to make a guild. Having achieved something is one of those.” [Grisela]

Now that she mentions it, that does make sense.

Around this time, I noticed that I’ve spent too much time already, so I decided to excuse myself.

“Thank you for the delicious tea.” [Ryouma]
“Do your best in your work, alright?” [Grisela]

Granny Gri saw me off outside her room, then I went to Serge-san’s shop.

“Welcome to the Morgan Firm. Please come this way.” [Employee]

The employee tending to the store greeted me, and brought me to a room. The place I was brought to was not guest room, but the storeroom. I have a lot of goods with me, so the first thing to do was to store these into the storeroom.

First were the ingots that weighed a total of 100kg. Then the strainers and the baskets, the bamboo ear cleaner (the soft part is made with the fluff of the fluff slime), the various bamboo products… and then just as I was taking out the bamboo charcoal, Serge-san arrived. We exchanged greetings, then after I finished unloading everything, the employees came to check the quality of the goods.

I waited at the guestroom while the employees ran their checks. Sitting in front of me was, of course, Serge-san. There, I took out several small boxes from my Item Box and handed them to Serge-san.

“These are this week’s portion. Please confirm the goods.” [Ryouma]

Serge-san took the small boxes, piling the contents by the edge of the desk one by one.

The contents of these small boxes are all ornaments that were handed to me to be uncursed. Of course, they’re no longer cursed now, and are just mere ornaments.

Serge-san gathers cursed goods, and hands them to me, allowing me to practice my skills. And in exchange, I uncurse the goods he hands me for free. The goods can’t be sold when cursed, but once uncursed, they can be sold like normal.

“I’ve checked everything. Thank you very much. Well then… please come this way.” [Serge]

A new set of cursed goods was given to me. I hid those in my Item Box. With this I’ve finished most of my business here in the Morgan Firm today. I chatted

with Serge-san for a while as I waited for the employees to finish the checking of the goods. When they finished, I got my compensation, and I left the firm.

The next place I'm headed to is the store I have which is located by the arena. My goal is to bring the potatoes, the dried corns, the bags to be used for the crushed ice as well as the paper bags, and finally, to replace the strainers. The strainers I'm using for my store are different form the ones I sell to the Morgan Firm.

I'm going to be at the arena anyway, so I figured I might as well register for the tournament, but then as I passed by the gates of the second town, I saw someone I didn't want to meet.

It was the guild master of the tamer guild, Matthew.

He was partially bald, being bald only at the top of his head, while the remaining hair he had was gray as ash. He had hollow cheeks and a pale, sickly complexion. And a melancholic aura seemed to linger about him as he muttered to himself.

The streets would normally be packed with people, but the area around Matthew was empty. Apparently, people found Matthew ghastly, and were avoiding him. Matthew didn't seem to notice me as he only passed by me, and left for the direction of the first town.

"…He's gotten even more haggard in the time I haven't seen him. But since he doesn't look anything like he did 3 years ago, regardless how much more haggard he becomes, not much changes…" [Ryouma]

Whenever I see Matthew, I can't help but remember how haughty he was when I first met him. The Matthew that passed by me and the Matthew then don't resemble each other at all. He's like a zombie nowadays.

From what I've heard, an assistant sent by the head office is now the one who's actually in control of the guild. And Matthew is now being made to run from place to place to deal with the ruffians appearing in the second town as well as to handle various routine duties.

I've never met the assistant who is now in control of the guild, so I don't know much about him. Speaking of which, this is now actually the second assistant. I

know a little about the previous assistant, but I don't know anything about this one at all.

It's hard to talk about the first one, but he was persistent in asking me to work for the tamer guild. Every time he would come, he would lambast Matthew and praise me. Thanks to the demon king's influence, however, I could tell that he was lying. So aside from the first time we met, I never struggled with dealing with the guy.

But the man was persistent, and he would come three to four times every month to the laundromat to try and convince me. He suddenly stopped coming after a few months. When I thought he'd given up, I heard he apparently disappeared.

Because of his sudden appearance, the guards visited my store since he was always coming there. I was really surprised. They just came to hear the details, but it was still really bad for my heart.

Incidentally, this story spread relatively quickly throughout the town. Rumors spread like wildfire, and people began wondering whether Matthew had something do with the man's disappearance. Matthew was also investigated, but in the end, it was decided that he had nothing to do with the case. However, since then, I hear Matthew's gotten extremely uncomfortable from then on.

As I thought those things as I walked, I passed by a large barn. It's the inn where a lot of slave demon magicians stay at.

"That was back when the ruffians were really going wild…" [Ryouma]

Around the time when the slave demon magicians and conjurers of the tamer guild started going wild, people were arrested. I thought for sure Matthew would also get arrested due to mismanagement, but because of the advocacy of the assistant that came, Matthew was spared.

Granny Gri says that the reason that assistant saved Matthew is so that he himself could avoid taking the blame all by himself. It's only a matter of time before Matthew gets the short end of the stick.

"…Mn? Come to think of it, what did Matthew come to do here?" [Ryouma]

I wonder if there's something going on in the town? Hmm… but whatever.

Anyway, I better hurry to the arena.

I went to the store in the arena, and delivered the goods. I asked whether they needed more hands to help out with the work, and then I decided to add one more worker just to be safe.

I informed the manager that I'll be getting another worker from the training facility once I get back, and will have him work at the store starting tomorrow. Then afterwards I went to register for the magic beast tournament.

When I went to register, the employee in charge explained to me the details regarding the tournament. The summary is as follows:

1. The tournament will start 10 days later.
2. There are two phases. First, are the qualifiers, and then the main tournament.
3. Each phase will take a day each, but the semifinals and the finals will be held on the third day alogn with the award ceremony, so all-in-all, the tournament will be three days long.
4. The qualifier is a free-for-all battle royal. Each participant can have up to five magical beasts.
5. The main tournament will be held like a standard tournament, and there will not be any set limitation on the number of magical beasts that one can bring. One can also refrain from sending all of his beasts in a certain round if he wishes to save some strength for the next round. Also, a participant can send out another beast once if the beast he has out in the battle is defeated.
6. A Rank and S Rank magical beasts are prohibited so as to ensure the safety of the spectators.
7. The participant must acknowledge that he or she will be responsible if his or her own beast is injured or killed.
8. Participants are forbidden from attacking other participants directly. Only the beasts may attack each other.
9. Participants are also not allowed to attack their opponent's magic beast directly. Participants are free to protect themselves, however.
10. The first place prize is 50,000 suits. The second place prize is 10,000 suits.

Up to five beasts for the preliminaries… Is a big slime considered "one"? Or is it considered "one-hundred"? It should still be considered as a single magic beast for now, but… I don't want to be stingy when it comes to the public unveiling

regarding the big slime too, so I think I'll have to come up with something.

In any case, I finished registering already, so I left the arena. When I got out, I noticed that the sun had already set.

I hurriedly went to the Slime Den Restaurant, and delivered the remaining potatoes, onions, and sesame seeds. I was there already, so I had my meal there as well, then I went back home. Along the way, I bought five barrels of wine from a store I frequented. I stored them in my Dimension Home. When I got out of the town, I used my dimension magic, and went home in an instant.

After gave the goblins some wine and some snacks as thanks for their work, I went to read the books my grandmother had left me before going to sleep, and studied medicine. After that, I decided to retire for the day… Ah, I forgot to think about the contents of my lesson with Elia's group… I guess I still can't sleep after all.

Chapter 18: First Lesson

Today I'll be teaching Elia's group for the first time. I am currently waiting in front of the gates to the training area. They said I didn't have to pick them up, and to just wait here, so that's what I did. I might've come a little too early though, ah… they're here.

I saw Sebasu-san driving the carriage from the direction of the town, so I asked the gatekeeper who happens to be a student of mine to open the gate. Then I went ahead, and waited by the stable. After the girls' carriage finished parking, the first one to go down was Elia.

"Sorry for making you wait, Ryouma-san." [Elia]
"Oh, it's alright, I didn't wait long at all. You're also earlier than the appointed time." [Ryouma]

Elia came up to me and said that as soon as she got down from the carriage. The other four also went down the carriage one by one, and went up to me to say hi. Today, everyone's wearing simple clothing and only have their weapons and staves with them. We don't have any plans of using those today though.

"Good morning, everyone. Umm~ I'll be in your care today. And since today's the first day, we'll be having our lecture in the classroom. The first thing I'll be teaching is the role of a magic wand and how to make it. After that, I'll have you make a simple wand. A lot of the things you'll learn here can be applied to your magic, so I'm sure you'll benefit from it."
"Please take care of us!" [Elia, Miyabi, Kanan, Michelle, Riera]

Good, there doesn't seem to be any problems. After all, there are plenty of magicians who know how to use staves, but don't know how to make them. But a good understanding of magic is also required in order to make a good staff, so it's really a good subject to study.

"Ryouma-sama, I leave the young lady and the others in your care." [Sebasu]

“Same here. Please take care of the students.” [Ryouma]

I exchanged some words with Sebasu-san, then when we got to the crossroads, we went our own ways. I took Elia’s group with me to the magic wand workshop, while Sebasu-san went to the magic practice area as an instructor.

When I opened the doors to the workshop, the first thing that greeted us were the bundles of lumbers to be used as ingredients for making wands and the storages for the tools. Right next to that was the workplace that had a number of windows through which the outside could be seen. The walls blocking the stray magic from the magic practice area are near the windows, but despite that, there’s plenty of ventilation and light.

I invited the five girls inside, and had them seat besides the workshop stand.

“Shall we start?” [Ryouma]

As I said that, I took five new notebooks from my Item Box as well as five bottles of ink and pen. I distributed them to the girls.

“Please use them when needed. These’re given to all the students as presents, so please don’t’ hold back.” [Ryouma]

The five girls each took their own notebook and pen. Then they immediately opened them, and readied themselves for the start of class. When I had confirmed that they were all ready, I began the class.

“Then let’s start… To start off, let me ask you all this question – what do you think makes a good wand?” [Ryouma]

The three magicians amongst the five girls answered.

“A wand with a high-quality magic jewel?” [Kanan]
“From what I’ve heard it’s the wand that conducts magic the best.” [Elia]
“The longer the better’s what I hear in my case.” [Miyabi]

I see…

“None of your answers are wrong, but none of them are right either. I’ll begin today’s lesson by tackling around that topic, so we’ll be starting with the basics.

Magic wands are supplemental tools for using magic. They’re not an absolute

requirement to casting magic. But they can increase the force of one's magic, make it easier to cast magic, and even reduce the magic power consumption. They have various effects, but why? Why are they able to do this? In order to explain that, let us first review how to use magic." [Ryouma]

When using magic, one must first release magic power outside of his or her body. Then through visualization transform that magic power into an attribute, maintain it, and then finally, cast the magic. Each and every one of these three processes is necessary when casting magic. Fail one of them, and the magic will not be casted.

Amongst these three processes, the most important process – and the process to which magic wands are related – is process number two, the transformation and preservation of magic power.

"You are all aware that magic power tends to disperse when released outside the body, yes?"

The girls who were diligently taking notes nodded. Magic dispersing is basic magic knowledge. It's written in every textbook, so of course they know.

"When released, magic power disperses. It's because of this that Magic Manipulation is necessary… If the magic power can't be maintained, then it'll disperse. It is also harder to maintain magic power after converting it to an attribute compared to when it's just magic power, so it's a lot easier for it to disperse." [Ryouma]

This is the reason why in the past, when I evolved a slime to an earth slime after feeding it earth attribute magic power, Elia and the Madam couldn't do the same thing.

"Which is why the faster a magician can convert the attribute of magic power, the faster he'll be able to cast magic. I'm sure you've been taught so when you first started learning magic. The faster the invocation, the less waste in magic power, so it's also more advantageous during combat." [Ryouma]

I paused for a moment, and checked whether the girls understood or not. After that I spoke again.

"With this I believe you've now come to an understanding regarding the loss of

magic power when invocating magic. Going to the main topic – which is the use of magic wand – it can be summarized into this one sentence: 'To reduce the wasted magic power'" [Ryouma]
"In other words, because there is less magic power wasted when using a wand, the magic power consumed by the spell is reduced, and at the same time, the strength of the magic is also increased, right?" [Elia]
"Precisely. To add to that, it is because magic wands help the magician deal with the two main issues that cause magic power waste. Those two points are the conversion and retention of magic power that I just mentioned." [Ryouma]

The first point is that magic disperses when the magician fails to control the magic power. Moreover, this magic power needs to be maintained even after converting it, all the way until the magic is finally invocated.

The other point is the loss that comes when magic power is converted. Humans might be able to convert magic power from neutral to another attribute, but some magic power is lost during the process.

"A student I had before likened the loss of magic power during conversion to the withdrawal fee charged by the bank when withdrawing. I think it's a great analogy. Now, how exactly do magic wands supplement this loss in magic power? With this we come back to the first question, and that is – what makes a good magic wand?" [Ryouma]

I had to talk about magic dispersion first as it has a lot to do with the quality of a magic wand.

"When it comes to choosing the material for the magic wand, it is best to choose a good conductor of magic power. A good example would be treant lumber. Treants have magic power flowing through them just as blood would in a human, so they are exceptional conductors. However, being a good conductor isn't the only criteria one should take note of." [Ryouma]
"What else is there?" [Kanan]
"Inside of the trees used to make magic wands, there's actually a pipe inside that transports the water and the nutrients that were absorbed from underground. This is called the fibrovascular bundle. This fibrovascular bundle has the property of being able to store magic power. When magic power passes through this, the wasted magic power is reduced. Moreover, due to the magic power being

managed, the magic power then becomes easier to handle.” [Ryouma]

They’re all showing faces of shock. I guess they didn’t know about this then.

“But while the material might have the property to contain magic power, the amount of magic power the material can retain depends on the kind and quality of the material being used. There are also materials that do better with certain attributes.”

As for what lumber works for what kind of wand, that’s not something I can teach in a short time.

“So in regards to Elia’s previous answer of “The wand that conducts magic power the best” it’s sort of right. However, if the material chosen is a good conductor for magic power, but in exchange, happens to have poor retention of magic power, then the magic power will slip away from the wand, and it’s possible that the wand created could have no effect.” [Ryouma]
“I see…” [Kanan]
“As for Miyabi-san’s “The longer the better” this has to do with the quality of the craftsman making the wand. What retains magic power inside the wand is the fibrovascular bundle, so when the material is cracked during the manufacturing process, then magic power will slip away easily.

If a skilled craftsman were to work with good material, then the longer magic wand will excel at preserving and rectifying magic power.” [Ryouma]

This is my personal opinion, but if one were to use cheap materials, then I think it’s better to just throw away the concept of retaining magic power with the wand, and just make it short, focusing on a wand that simply controls magic power. A shorter wand will be easier to carry. And besides, making a wand unnecessarily long will just increase the holes from where magic power can slip out.

“So that’s how it is.” [Miyabi]

Michelle-san then asked me a question.

“Teacher, how about the quality of the magic jewel used?” [Michelle]
“Magic jewels don’t deal with magic dispersion, instead they make it easier to convert magic power. We’ll be talking about magic jewels next. So first, let me

ask: how do you use magic jewels?” [Ryouma]

The ones who answered this question were Kanan-san and Elia.

“Magic power flows from the body into the magic jewel, rolling it in the magic power within the jewel, and pushing it out.” [Kanan]
“That magic power is then mixed with one’s own magic power, and used to invocate magic.” [Elia]
“There is also that method. Usually used when one is out of magic power, but still needs to fight. However, this isn’t the original purpose of magic jewels affixed to wands.” [Ryouma]

The magic jewel is affixed to the wand, so the part about magic power about flowing into it is right. But the real purpose of a magic jewel isn’t to use the magic power inside it, but to simply let magic power flow through it.

“Just let magic power flow through it? Then how is the magic power wasted reduced?” [Michelle]
“As you all know; magic jewels can have any kind of magic power attribute in them except for space magic. Now, neutral attribute magic power is easily influenced by other attributes, so by letting it pass through the jewel first, one can make it easier on himself to convert that neutral magic attribute to another attribute. As a result, the success rate of conversion goes up, and the wasted magic power is reduced.” [Ryouma]

Michelle-san’s eyes opened wide when she heard that. The other four also expressed faces of shock.

Looks like they didn’t know about this too. Then again none of the people I’ve taught so far knew about this, so I suppose it’s more or less uncommon knowledge. A lot of masters know from their experience that the better the magic jewel the better the wand, so they pass that knowledge down to their disciples. There aren’t many craftsmen who know about this tidbit, so it really can’t be helped that few know about it.

But in my case, well… my master is like that, so of course, I was able to learn of it.

“Come to think of it, I might’ve heard something similar from my grandpa…” [Kanan]

“Oh? Kanan-san, you knew about this?” [Ryouma]
“My grandpa is a magic tool craftsman. And he once mentioned that if one were to put a magic jewel of the same attribute as the magic imbued into the tool, then the magic power will flow better. He also said that it is when I’m able to feel that change in flow that I’ve truly graduated.” [Kanan]

As she said that, she went “Ah!” as if she remembered something.

“Could it be? Is it also easier to convert the attribute the better the quality of the magic jewel?” [Kanan]
“Spectacular. That is indeed the case. Magic power converts easier when it passes through high-quality magic jewel.” [Ryouma]

As I said that, Kanan-san made an expression that said “I knew it!”

“Also, your grandpa was most likely referring to the same thing I mentioned just now, and that magic jewel your grandpa was talking about is being used to better the conversion rate of magic power. After all your grandpa said “a magic jewel of the same attribute as the magic imbued into the tool.”

If one wants to use fire magic, then that person should use a magic wand with the attribute of fire. Other attributes can also be used, but the efficiency will be reduced.

“So it’s not only the quality of the stone that one needs to pay attention to, but also the attribute that one specializes in. Aside from that, there’s also the ease of carrying, as well as other things. But overall these are the important points when choosing a magic wand. In my opinion, it’s best to select a wand based on its overall stats rather than just one point.

…Now going back to the initial question of what is a good wand… truth be told, there’s no actual answer to this. The ideal wand changes depending on the attribute one specializes in and how one uses wands, so if you want something strong, it’s best to go for something order made.” [Ryouma]
“Then how about this wand we’re using now?” [Miyabi]
“It’s good enough for beginners. But from what I’ve seen in the fight a few days ago, it doesn’t suit you girls anymore… If you don’t mind, could I have a look at it for a bit?” [Ryouma]
“Sure.” [Miyabi]

Miyabi-san handed me the wand. Immediately, I examined the flow of magic power and the hue of the magic jewel attached.

The wand is made out of treant lumber, but not with the branch which is most suited for wands. Instead, it's made out of a tree trunk that was crushed, and then cut… It's not a bad conductor, but it has poor retention. The magic jewel is also just barely passable. Its attribute is neutral… that has a lower effect than the others, but it's the best choice when you don't know what attribute the user specializes in. So it's the best choice for beginner students. In any case, this wand definitely gives off the feeling that it was made for mass production.

I examined Michelle-san's and Elia's wands too, and the make and quality of the wands were the same.

"As expected you three should use wands more fitting for yourselves… You've come all the way here, so why don't I teach you all how to make a wand, and then you can go make your own. There're plenty of materials here, so let's make them together." [Ryouma]

As I said that I began preparing the treant's branches, which we will be using to make the wands, as well as the tools that we will be using.

Chapter 19: First Lesson (2)

Beside me are eight pieces of lumber and tools enough for six people. What we're about to make is the most basic of wands, having only a magic jewel affixed at its end with no special ornaments.

I distributed the lumbers and the knives to the girls, one for each, and then I started the explanations as I worked on mine.

"The creation of magic wands can be divided into four stages. Drafting, Refining, Coating, and Installing. The first is drafting, so please begin by shaving your branches using your knives to create the body of your wand." [Ryouma]

The knife in my hand moved from one end of the branch to another, shaving it layer by layer, slowly molding the branch into the rough draft of a wand's body. The girls followed suit, and began shaving theirs as well. This part's fairly easy, so even if they're not used to it, they should finish in 20 minutes or so.

"Next comes refining. This part also uses knives or files to shave the branch, but this time, we'll be pouring magic power as we shave the branch. Please shave the branch according to the flow of magic power." [Ryouma]

This part's a bit more difficult. If the branch is poorly shaved, the fibrovascular tube could be damaged, so it's imperative that the craftsman ascertain where the fibrovascular tube is by pouring magic power into the branch as he shaves it. But what's more is that a craftsman must shave the branch as much as he can. This stage is a crucial factor in deciding the quality of the wand.

As I explained that to the girls, I focused my Magic Perception, and worked on mine while I kept a watchful eye on the girls.

"…" [Riera]
"…" [Michelle]

Riera-san and Michelle quietly shaved their branches. They're not bad for

beginners, but they seem to be having difficulties feeling the flow of magic power, causing them to stop from time to time to check the position of the fibrovascular tube.

“Is it here?” [Elia]
“Ah! I did it again…” [Miyabi]

Elia and Miyabi-san are having a hard time shaving, but they’re doing a decent job of feeling the flow of magic power. They’re shaving too much though… I’ll give them some advice to help them out.

And finally, there’s one person who’s having a better time than everyone else. It’s Kanan-san.

“…” [Kanan]

She works quietly just like Riera-san and Michelle-san, but her hands move fast. Moreover, she’s barely damaged the fibrovascular tube. That’s a rare sight amongst beginners.

“Kanan-san, you’re doing a really good job. Please keep it up.” [Ryouma]
“Really?” [Kanan]
“Yes. I thought you’d have a harder time since it’s your first time, but you’re actually doing pretty well. By any chance, is Magic Perception your specialty?” [Ryouma]
“It is. I can only repair magic tools and use Enchantment Magic, so I naturally became good at it… Wait, you’re making a second one?” [Kanan]

Kanan-san said that out when she saw what was in my hands. Just as she mentioned, I’ve began working on a second branch. This stage is actually easy so long as one is good at Magic Perception. Moreover, I’m sharpening the knife with my ki, so I’m able to shave the branch really fast.

I’m already used to it, so if it wasn’t for me having to teach them, I could refine a branch up to the Refining Stage in five minutes. Of course, the quality is also good. If I use Qi Gong I can go even faster, and get better results. I don’t have to put a lot of strength when the knife cuts well, so I don’t end up shaving more than I should either.

Kanan was a bit surprised by my skill in wand making, but after that, she

continued to work quietly along with the rest of the girls. By the time it was almost noon, the girls finally completed the Refining Stage. At that moment, Sebasu-san dropped by.

“Excuse me.” [Sebasu]
“Thank you for your efforts, Sebasu-san. You came at a good time; we were just about to take a break.” [Ryouma]
“Thank you for your efforts as well, Ryouma-sama. I came to deliver the ladies their lunch.” [Sebasu]

Sebasu-san took out a parcel that looked like a bentou, and began preparing the girls’ meal.

Meanwhile, I opened the window, and blew away the shavings with wind magic. At that, air entered from the outside, replacing the dusty air, and gathering the fallen woodchips. I gathered those and hid them away. As for Elia and the others, they cleaned up the workshop, and wiped the place clean with a cloth.

Apparently, Sebasu-san had also prepared my portion as he lined up enough bentou for six people.

“I’ll be taking my leave now.” [Sebasu]

Sebasu-san said he had to go back immediately. It seems there’re still plenty of students who want to learn from Sebasu-san.

“The students here are all passionate, so there’s value in teaching them. I’ll have my lunch later, so please don’t mind me.” [Sebasu]
“Thank you very much. Please take care.” [Ryouma]
s
I sent off Sebasu-san, then I sat before my workbench where I’d left my bentou, and began eating.

“Let’s eat.” [Ryouma]

When I opened the bentou, what was inside was a meat and vegetable sandwich with some fruits on the side. As we ate our sandwiches, I talked about the concepts we touched when refining the branch. After 30 minutes, we finished eating, and we went back to working.

“We’re done with the Drafting and Refining stages, so up next is the Coating Stage. First, you need to prepare a soft paint brush and paint. Then you need to mix powdered magic jewel, and coat your brush with it. With this, you’ll be able to let magic power flow easier, and reduce leakage.” [Ryouma]
“The mixing of the powdered magic jewel with paint is the same as the ink used in magic formations, right?” [Kanan]
“Yes, after all, the purpose is the same as the ink, which is to let magic power flow better. So there’s not much of a difference.” [Ryouma]

There’s also the quick drying property in the ink for the lesson’s sake, but I’ll just put that aside.

“Try to make the magic jewels as thin as possible when crushing them. And please ensure that the mix is even all over when coating. Otherwise, the flow of magic power won’t be equal throughout your wand, and it’ll be harder to use it.” [Ryouma]

After that, I continued to observe the work of the girls. The one who excelled the most was Michelle-san. You could really feel her experience from her speed in pulverizing and mixing magic jewels.

After the Coating Stage ended, we left the wands leaning against a wall to dry them. Then I took out magic jewels with a diameter of 3cm along with some bowl-shaped pedestals split in half, and distributed them to the girls.

Supposedly, if one is aiming to be a wand craftsman, even the cut of the magic jewels and the creation of the pedestal should be studied, but today’s lesson’s focus is on the practical so side, so I’m omitting that for now. They can just these things that were made beforehand.

“The next stage is the last, and is the installation of the magic jewel. Once the coating dries, glue is melted in water at 60 degrees Celsius. Upon turning liquid, it is then mixed with the powdered magic jewel mix. The wand is completed when the magic jewel is successfully installed to the wand. The trick to installing the magic jewel lines in the pedestal, the wand itself, and in gluing the wand. Please make sure to cover every nook and cranny in glue. After that is…” [Ryouma]

I pull a drawer from one of the shelves in the storage room for tools, and pull

out a cloth that looks no different from a white bandage. This cloth will be used to affix the wand to the pedestal while the glue is still drying.

After that, as we waited for the wands to finish drying, I talked to the girls about the different qualities of magic wands.

…I think it's about time for the wands to finish drying.

After confirming that all of the wands were done drying, we proceeded to the next stage.

I took out a pan, and we heated the glue and the water together. The six magic jewels might not be big, but there's still six of them being cooked, so it couldn't be helped that the room grew hot.

We endured that heat, and successfully affixed the jewels to the body of the wand. Now all that's left is to leave these here to dry overnight. In other words, today's class is done for the day.

At this point, I suddenly felt like hearing what Elia and the others thought of my lesson. We just finished affixing the jewels after all, so I guess it wouldn't hurt.

"Good work, everyone. With this, today's lesson comes to a close. How was the class?" [Ryouma]
"It was really interesting." [Elia]
"It was thorough, easy to understand, and really beneficial." [Michelle]

I asked the other three, and they all seemed satisfied with the lesson.

"I'm happy to hear everyone enjoyed. Actually, this class is really unpopular. Only one student attends." [Ryouma]

He has some errands to do for his family today, so he's absent. But, normally, only Toll, who's going to inherit his family's business of woodcraft, attends. From time to time, a new student would come, but aside from that, he's my only student.

"So normally, it's just Ryouma-dono and another student?" [Riera]
"Yes. Even though it's an important subject for magicians. But since most magicians would rather use their time to practice their magic, barely anyone

attend the class a second time… Continuing the class would be beneficial for them too. But still… I won't force them." [Ryouma]
"Benefits? What sort?" [Elia]
"You had to use Magic Perception, right? That's why if you keep making wands, your Magic Perception will be trained. That in itself has plenty of benefits." [Ryouma]

I told the girls about how I was able to use Magic Perception right before our match a few days ago. They were suspicious at the start, but after I told them their respective magic power, they had no choice but to believe me. After all, I hadn't heard about anyone else's magic power aside from Elia.

"Being able to measure other people's magic power aside, I'm sure we can all agree that the ability to sense magic power nearby is beneficial even to people who don't use magic. And excelling at Magic Perception will also prove beneficial to someone wishing to excel at Magic Manipulation and Magic." [Ryouma]

It's difficult to manipulate what you can't see.

Putting aside the training regime for magic in this world, it's commonly accepted that magicians become better at magic the more they use it. Of course, magicians receive instructions on manipulating magic when training, but they're also often told that Magic Perception can be naturally trained by using magic a lot.

That's not wrong. However, because it takes a long time to train one's Magic Perception, people often think it's better to just train their magic, and train their Magic Perception in that way. And to be honest, I actually agree with them to an extent. But once the future and the casting of advanced magic is taken into consideration, I think it's better to train Magic Perception by focusing on it.

"And so… I'll be adding Magic Perception training on your menu starting tomorrow. Results are hard to come by in a short time, so I'll have to ask you girls to continue training even after getting back to your academy." [Ryouma]

There's a way to train Magic Perception even without magic power, so they can train it so long as they have time. They should be able to train it without it getting in the way of their studies, right? Of course, it'd be great if they could get some results while they're here, but I doubt they'd able to get any during their

long vacation.

If everything goes well, they might get some results, but the whole vacation is five months. If you take away the time they used to get here, and the time going back, and the time to prepare for the next semester, they'll have three months of vacation at most… I doubt that's enough time to get results. I've been worrying about this since last night, but unfortunately, there's nothing I can do about their time.

Which is why I told them about what sort of things they can do after training their Magic Perception. Now, all that's left is to leave it up to their determination. As long as they keep it up, I'm sure they'll get results.

As we were cleaning up after that, out of the blue, Kanan-san suddenly asked me a question.

"Speaking of which, Ryouma-kun, do you have a girlfriend?" [Kanan]
"Why all the sudden?" [Ryouma]

Being suddenly asked that, I couldn't help but pause in my tracks for a moment.

"We were asked so when we got to the training facility yesterday." [Kanan]
"Ryouma-kun, you rarely get seen around with women, so seeing you together with us was apparently a strange sight. Well, students and teachers aside, you being with female friends is apparently rare." [Michelle]
"Kanan and Miyabi sure drew a lot of attention." [Riera]

Michelle-san and Riera-san said as they continued to sweep the floor.

"I'm not seeing any girls as of now." [Ryouma]
"While I was studying swordsmanship, some hopeful guys came, and asked if Ryouma-dono preferred men…" [Riera]
"That's a definite no. Also, if you could tell me the names of those who're asking, I'd be much obliged. I have to make sure to keep some distance after all." [Ryouma]

I don't have that sort of hobby!

"How about you guys? Since you're all going to school, I'm sure you all must've more opportunities to mingle with the opposite sex near your own age."

{Ryouma}

The girls shrunk when I asked that.

“Well I’m usually either in my room or at the workshop except for during class hours or when I’m with Elia and the others, so no one’s asked me out.” [Kanan]
“Well if it’s someone we know, and the relationship becomes like that, then it’s another story.” [Miyabi]
“Most people just look at the family name, so I don’t think something like that could happen.” [Elia]
“For most noble children, the academy’s just a place to meet or rendezvous with others, so it can’t be helped… In other words, the world of love is also far away from us.” [Michelle]

Suddenly, Michelle-san remembered something, and she looked at Riera.

“But Riera’s different though, right?” [Michelle]
“If you’re going to ask whether there’s love, well it’d be troubling, but… I do have a fiancé.” [Riera]
“Really?” [Ryouma]

Well that’s news to me.

“I’m aspiring to be a knight, so my parents worried that I might end up marrying too late. Because of that, they went ahead, and got the son of a long distant relative, and, well… you know. As for what kind of person he is, he’s a quiet, serious guy.” [Riera]

Riera-san’s expression was calm and quiet. It would appear she’s not against her engagement. When I heard that she’s engaged, I thought her parents pressured her into it… I even imagined a situation where she would run away because she doesn’t want to be engaged, but apparently that doesn’t seem to be the case for her.

As I was thinking those things, the conversation stopped, and silence visited the room for a few seconds. The next few words that Michelle-san said next quickly changed the topic.

“…Hey, Ryouma-kun, could it be you’re bad with women?” [Michelle]

Mn? I don’t think so, but… why all of the sudden?

“I don’t so, no, why? Have I done anything strange?” [Ryouma]
“Mn~… Rather than strange, it’s more like you’re keeping distance.” [Michelle]
“Distance?” [Ryouma]

I couldn’t quite pick up what she was saying, so I ended up asking that, but everyone else aside from me seemed to understand. Michelle-san explained.

“It’s not to the extent that you’re cold or anything, but… It’s more like it always feels like you’re just focused on work.” [Michelle]
“Right, right, that’s exactly it. Our ages aren’t that apart to begin with, so it’s fine to speak your mind.” [Kanan]
“Oh, I see. I understand.” [Ryouma]

I wonder if it’s because I’ve never had any relations with women in my past life? I wasn’t doing it on purpose, but it seems I’ve unconsciously put up a wall… That’s definitely not a good thing…

“While you don’t have to force yourself to change immediately, it’d be great if you could get used to it slowly.” [Michelle]
“I’ll do my best.” [Ryouma]
“Then you should start by removing the “-san” from my name. I’m not used to being called with “-san” you see.” [Kanan]
“I understand, Kanan]
“Although it doesn’t feel as distant anymore, the way you say it sounds a bit strange.” [Kanan]

I can see that myself actually. It’s probably because it’s already become a habit.

“There’s no need to hurry. I also know very well that Ryouma-dono isn’t the type to hurt women. Moreover, Ryouma-dono is also our teacher, so please don’t hold back. Feel free to call me Riera.” [Riera]
“I understand, Riera.” [Ryouma]
“Don’t forget me.” [Michelle]
“Of course, Michelle.” [Ryouma]

…It definitely feels off. Get used to it!

Next is Miyabi-san, no. I will also refer to Miyabi as just Miyabi.

Like this the distance between us lessened, and as we chatted while sweeping the place, the last thing we talked about was the Magic Beast Tournament.

“Ryouma-han, are you entering the tournament?” [Miyabi]
“Didn’t you say before that you’re not interested?” [Kanan]
“Yeah, but I need to attend.” [Ryouma]
“Then wouldn’t you need to prepare? When’s the tournament?” [Elia]
“In nine days.” [Ryouma]
“Hey, there’s no time left at all.” [Michelle]
“Will you be using that kid that pulls the monster carriage?” [Kanan]
“No, only my slimes will be fighting.” [Ryouma]

After this, the girls told me that preparing for the tournament’s more important, so it’s fine even if we put the training for later.

I can feel the girls’ concern from their words, so I decided to use the days until the tournament for the slimes’ training and strategizing.

Chapter 20: Magic Beast Tournament Opening

9 Days later

Putting my all into it, I took my slimes to the arena early in the morning. The second town's always hustling and bustling with people, but today seems to be especially busy. But then again, that's only to expected. After all, today's the opening of the Magic Beast Tournament.

A lot of people have come to spectate or participate in the matches these coming three days. I walked through that busy town, and when I finally arrived at the arena, the guards shouted me words of encouragement.

"Do your best!" [Guard 1]
"Treat us out if you win." [Guard 2]
"Be careful, alright." [Guard 3]

Those people who called out to me are the adventurers working here as guards. There are a lot of magic beasts gathered here because of the tournament, so just to be safe, the organizers sent out a request. And apparently, it was the adventurer's guild of Gimuru who took on that request.

The guild directly notified adventurers B Rank up. They also called out to me, but I'm going to be participating in the tournament, so I refused.

Because of that, familiar faces called out to me as I walked until I finally turned at the entrance used for transporting goods. There's another entrance aside from this which is the normal entrance, but that entrance is only big enough for people. Magical beasts can't enter through it, so participants like me have to use this entrance. This is something that I learned when I registered.

"Fushuu!" [Beast 1]
"Gururururu…" [Beast 2]
"Gieee!" [Beast 3]
"Kyun…" [Beast 4]

On the other side of that entrance that was now forbidden except to related personnel, was a large crowd of magical beasts and participants. There were all

sorts of magical beasts from different sizes to different types. Some were excited, eager to fight, and others were visibly scared. The participants could also be seen giving off sparks from time to time.

“In any case, I should first report my arrival.” [Ryouma]

I walked to a tent near the entrance that’s been temporarily placed there to serve as a reception desk.

“May I know your name?” [Receptionist]
“Ryouma Takebayashi.” [Ryouma]
“Can I see your proof of participation? …Yes, thank you very much. Please wait a moment.” [Receptionist]

After I showed the proof of my participation that I got after registering, the male receptionist looked through his register of names.

“I’ve confirmed your registration. I am returning this proof of participation. Takebayashi-sama, your match is number 24.” [Receptionist]
“I’ve been informed that participants need to have his personal belongings checked. Do I need to have my things checked now?” [Ryouma]
“It’s possible to have it now, but the participant won’t be able to leave. Takebayashi-sama, your match is still in the afternoon, so it should be fine even if you have the body check later. Please feel free to enjoy yourself until noon.” [Receptionist]
“Thank you very much.” [Ryouma]

Then I guess I should watch my rivals until noon… I’ll probably have to watch standing, but being able to watch even a little should be good.

So I entered the arena through its entrance, and headed for the spectators’ seats. As expected, waves of people crowded the area, and there was no place left to sit. I was somehow able to find a spot to stand on, but from time to time, a head would pass by and block my vision.

“Elia and the others said they’d come to cheer on me, but… there’s no way I could tell where they are with this.” [Ryouma]

It was here that a man suddenly stepped into the center of the stage, and the sounds of music erupted, drowning the noise of the crowd. With the flourish of

trumpets out, the tournament was about to begin.

<<Ladies and gentleman! The long awaited battle between Riforu Kingdom's challengers and their magical beasts is here! I officially declare the Magic Beast Tournament open!>>

The man's voice echoed throughout the arena as he announced the opening of the tournament. After that, he lightly explained the rules of the tournament, but this time, he talked a lot calmer. Also, I can feel some hint of magic power in his voice… is this magic? Come to think of it, I do recall making magic like that in the past…

As I was thinking that, the explanation regarding that voice of his came.

Apparently, it's because of the magic tool that was excavated from some ruins some few months ago. A lot of the same magic tool was found, so they were distributed to the various research labs and to the magic guild. After analyzing them, a portion of those magic tools flowed into the market, and was sold. That same artifact is being used In the explanations of this tournament now.

Even though they're artifacts, they actually flowed into the market that easily… Well, it's probably because all it does is amplify the voice so it wasn't valued much. Or maybe they can mass produce it? I'm not that familiar with magic tools though, so I wouldn't know. I should ask Kanan when I have time.

The participants for the first round seemed to have been waiting while the man on stage was greeting the audience, since as soon as he finished, those two participants immediately entered. At their entrance, two voices belonging to the host and the commentator sounded. They started talking about the participants and their respective magical beasts.

<<Please welcome the recently rising newcomer of the tamer guild, Podro! Riding on his magical beast, the Barbell Reindeer, what a magnificent entrance!>>

A young man entered the stage, riding on what appeared to be a reindeer with two black horns that resembled pitchforks, growing out of it. Rather than magnificent though, I'd say he looks more nervous since he looks so stiff that he seems to be having a hard time moving. Or maybe his entrance is magnificent because he's visibly trying to keep his back straight to avoid looking nervous?

<<So– what sort of magical beast is this Barbell Reindeer?>>
<<The Barbell Reindeer lives in the snows mountains, and is often considered to be one of the gentler beasts out there, but it is undoubtedly a B Rank magical beast. Naturally, despite its gentle nature, it has power befitting that of a B Rank magical beast. For example, those giant horns on its head are more than capable of easily perforating armor. Moreover, Barbell Reindeers are also known to cast electric magic from time to time>>
<<Well, I guess that means we have a big one right off the bat. Continuing——>>

They continued in that manner, introducing and explaining the participant. When both sides were finally gathered, the match started. After the match ended, the participants left, the arena was repaired, and then the tournament proceeded on to the next match. It was in this way the matches continued.

Incidentally, the winner of the first match was Podro and the Barbell Reindeer. That reindeer was really strong. It struck its foe with its horns. It roasted it with electricity. And then it trampled it underfoot its seemingly hard hooves. Also, apparently, when that reindeer uses its electric magic, its horns turn head, and become really hot. The original purpose behind that was apparently for it to melt the snow and drink it, but when used during battle, it proves to be a formidable weapon. I'll need to watch out for that.

As for how the battle was, well… How should I put it?

"To sum it up briefly: it was a brawl." [Ryouma]

Seeing tens of magical beasts go wild at the same time is certainly amazing, but on the other hand, it could also be said to be the picture of hell. After the sixteen matches ended, I quickly ate my meal, and then I took the slime that I'll be using from my Dimension Home. From what I've seen, the other participants also wielded some weapon and shield for self-defense, so I also took out my blade, and sheathed it at my waist.

After I finished my preparations, I let a slime ride over each of my shoulders, one over my head, while I carried one last slime in my arms, then I entered the entrance to the participants' area. Participants are limited to a maximum of five magical beasts in the preliminaries. As for how I'm going to fight… thanks to Elia and the others, I was able to get enough time to think up a strategy, so I'll be

going for the win!

When I lined up for the body check, the voices of other participants fell on my ears.

“Hey, hey, look at that guy.” [Participant 1]
“He’s actually going to fight with those slimes?” [Participant 2]
“Is he looking down on this tournament?” [Participant 3]

These people came from a different town. Moreover, they came from one quite some distance away. As for why I know that, well that’s because――

“Ah, that guy’s the cleaner.” [Participant 4]
“That guy fighting with slimes is an adventurer? Can his slimes really fight?” [Participant 5]
“Weren’t the cleaner’s slimes just pets? From what I hear, it’s the cleaner himself who’s strong, and the slimes just eat the unneeded parts of magical beasts.” [Participant 6]

It’s because the people living near Gimuru give that sort of response. They’ve heard a little of the rumors about me, so they’re only half-convinced. As for the people who know me well――

“…” [Participant 7]
“Uwa…” [Participant 8]
“What a pain… But then again, he’s only using five slimes, so he might actually lose in the preliminaries…” [Participant 9]

These guys are from the tamer guild… probably. Because there aren’t a lot of people capable of forming a contract with a B Rank magical beast, and because of all the bandits I’ve been catching plus the contract I’ve formed with my cannonball rhino, Rai, these sort of people have increased.

I don’t know if it’s because they’re guilty or what, but from time to time, I can see these guys avoiding my gaze. I mean sure it’s not exactly nice being underestimated, but being treated like cancer isn’t very nice either… But then again, they are from the tamer guild, and matters related to them being pleasant is rare, so I guess it’s just as usual.

The line proceeded gradually until finally it was my turn. In front of me were a

woman and four rough men.

“You are Ryouma Takebayashi-sama, correct? We will be inspecting the magic tools you have with you. Do you have any?” [Female Personnel]
“No, there’s nothing.” [Ryouma]
“Then please excuse me…” [Female Personnel]

The moment the woman before me said that, the magic power she exhaled wrapped itself around me. After which, she smiled that usual business smile of hers as she informed that the inspection was over.

“What was that just now?” [Ryouma]
“Enchantment magic to detect whether or not you have magic tools or weapons on your person.” [Female Personnel]

Apparently, that magic was meant to confirm whether I had any magic tools with me, so she knows for sure whether or not I have. And in case I do have, she would investigate.

Magic tools can be imbued with the slave demon magic or conjuration, so anyone with magic powr can use them. And even slave demon magic users and conjurers use them. The purpose of this inspection is to find out whether a participant is using a magic tool. In which case, he or she would immediately be expelled.

…Furthermore, there are many defects amongst magic tools imbued with slave demon magic or conjuration, making them prone to accidents, so they’re currently prohibited, and are not being sold. Just being in possession of them is plenty bad.

“But even then, it can still be found if one looks hard enough, so we still have to check. It’s also in the rules.” [Female Personnel]

That’s true. This woman in front of me is checking just in case. She also has a magic tool imbued with dimension magic, so they have more than enough countermeasure to deal with one in case there is.

“Thank you for your work.” [Ryouma]

I didn’t have any magic tools on me, so the inspection immediately ended. Following the instructions of the personnel in charge, I entered into waiting

room. If I'd brought a large-type magical beast with me, I would have been shown to the storehouse, but since all I have with me are my slimes, I was just brought here.

When the person who would be coming out in the same match as me entered into the waiting room, he glared at me. However, he immediately lost interest, and averted his gaze. Seemingly unconcerned, he lightly greeted me, and then sat at a corner in the room as he looked around the area. There were water and snacks prepared in the room. There were also people chatting and people loitering around.

But none of the faces belong to any of my acquaintances, so no came to talk to me. I just quietly sat in my seat while caressing my slimes until my turn finally came.

And after some time of waiting, my turn finally came.

"Sorry for the wait. All participants for match number 24, please come." [Personnel]

At those words, everyone in the room including me, stood up, and we followed the personnel in charge.

Now, let the match begin!

Chapter 21: Preliminaries

At the instructions of the official, the participants went out to the arena one after another with their magical beasts. The cries of beasts resounded within the dim path, but upon nearing the exit, the cheers of the spectators along with the light from outside drowned their cries away.

Ryouma's debut was getting closer and closer.

The first one to go out was a woman with four of the same beautiful magical beast.

<<How beautiful!! Just what sort of magical beast is that?>> [Host]
<<That's a… C Ranked magical beast, a Spore Butterfly. It's a terrifying magical beast>> [Analyst]
<<Terrifying?>> [Host]
<<Please don't be fooled by its looks. Spore Butterflies generate powerful digestive liquids within their bodies which they spit on their foes, melting their bodies, allowing them to slurp them for food! They're carnivores! When Spore Butterflies appear, it's common for people to disappear, leaving behind only their weapons and armors.>> [Analyst]
<<T-That is quite terrifying… To think she actually has four of those… Which beast will these Spore Butterflies feast on? Or will they, instead, be feasted on? >> [Host]

Ryouma also heard the explanation, but he wasn't panicked in the slightest, only thinking to himself that there wasn't much of a difference between that and acid slimes. Although Ryouma was competing as well, he wasn't nervous at all, and was instead exceedingly calm.

The next participant came out, and what he brought with him was a magical beast capable of even defeating large-type magical beasts. With the terrifying prowess of poison and three heads, it was the Trident Snake.

After that finally came Ryouma's turn.

"Takebayashi-sama, please." [Official]
"Thank you very much." [Ryouma]

Ryouma leisurely carried his slimes as he approached the exit. Having come from the dim path, Ryouma couldn't help but narrow his eyes. He walked straight toward the elliptical-arena to one of its sides where an official carrying a flag stood.

There are 19 opponents for this round. And they all stood along the shape of the arena, some distance away from the wall separating them from the spectators. Ryouma walked toward his spot as the commentators talked about his magical beasts.

<<Entering now is participant Ryouma Takebayashi! And with him are the first slimes to make an appearance in this entire tournament! What an odd participant!!>>

When those words resounded in the arena, the spectators all voiced out their disbelief.

Can he win?
Is he seriously trying?
Isn't he just trying to hype the crowd?

Such impressions could be heard here and there, but…

"Uooooooo!" [Spectator Fan 1]
"Do your best!!" [Spectator Fan 2]

In one part of the spectator seats was a group of people fervently cheering for Ryouma. These people are all either members of the research facility or the training facility, so when Ryouma decided to participate in the tournament, word got out, and they decided to make a cheering squad. They are all cheering for Ryouma from the bottom of their hearts. But even then, the slime researchers in particular were especially passionate.

The spectators were feeling disappointed because of the slimes, but because of the cheering squad, some of the spectators became excited. Gradually, the difference in hype between the spectators caused confusion to spread.

<<It seems he plans to participate with slimes, but… What do you think?>> [Host]
<<Well… they are slimes…>> [Analyst]

The analyst amongst the two commentators meant no ill will, but compared to the other contestants, he was clearly biased against the slimes. Still… In order to keep the crowd hyped, he chose to keep his opinion vague. For the same reason, the host tried to reveal Ryouma's information, but…

<<Umm… From what I've heard, participant Takebayashi is a C Rank adventurer, and has many high class slimes under his command>> [Host]
<<Being a C Rank at that age is certainly an admirable feat, but in this tournament, only the magical beasts will be fighting, so… And even if the slimes are of a higher class, well… I just can't help but wonder exactly how he plans to fight with them>> [Analyst]
<<…Participant Takebayashi, what a mystery! Will his battle be short-lived! Or is he the dark horse of the tournament, ladies and gentleman, please keep your eyes peeled, and decide for yourselves!>> [Host]

As the host finished introducing Ryouma, Ryouma arrived at his spot, and the host and analyzer moved on to the next participant.

After that, participants steadily entered the arena one after another, and Ryouma brought down his slimes as he did his preparations for the match. When he did so, he saw some familiar faces almost directly behind them, there in the second floor, above the entrance

"So that's where Elia's group was…" [Ryouma]

Elia and her friends were sitting on the special seats for nobles. They were sitting especially near the arena, and walls separated them from other seats. Their seat was clearly of the highest class.

"Well, it's them after all, so it's no surprise." [Ryouma]

It's a group with the daughters of a duke and a count, so there's nothing odd at all about them sitting in the noble seats. As Ryouma was wondering about the other two sitting on that room-like seat but weren't nobles, the participants all finished lining up on the arena.

Ryouma steeled himself, and went to the center of the arena as he waited for the signal to start sound.

<<It is now the 24th match of the preliminaries——>>

With the start of their match right before their eyes, the glare of the participants grew fiercer.

<<In this 24th match, who will be the one to proceed?——>>

The magic beasts entered into battle mode as an intimidating aura greater than anything they've released yet burst.

<<Preliminaries, 24th match, fight!>>

"——!!!!"

Howls echoed within the arena as the chains keeping the brawl at bay were released. Immediately, several of the beasts rushed for Ryouma's slimes.

Ryouma instantaneously responded, ordering his five slimes according to their practice these past 9 days.

The slimes Ryouma brought out today are 3 Iron Slimes, a Mimic Slime, and a slime known as the Portion Slime.

According to the rules of the preliminary, every participant can only bring out a maximum of 5 magical beasts, so Ryouma decided to hold back on the announcement of the big reveal of the Big Slime just yet. Instead, he came up with a plan to win.

Following Ryouma's instructions, two of the three iron slimes transformed into a flat plank upon which a mimic slime and a portion slime were, who were then taken by the remaining iron slime into its body as they all transformed into a seamless iron ball.

Attacking them was a native of the Shurus Great Forest, the Galmos Alligator. Although it wasn't particularly fast, but because it was standing near Ryouma, it was able to close the distance in no time at all.

"Get rid of the small fries first!" [Male Participant]

The galmos alligator followed the instruction of its master, and right before it

crashed into the slimes, it stopped in its tracks, twisted its body, and whipped its fat tail against the slimes, lightly flicking them away. After which, it changed its target to one of the magical beasts also aiming for Ryouma's slimes.

To the galmos alligator and its master, Ryouma and his slimes were no longer an issue.

<<Oh no! Takebayashi's has been sent flicked off! No, actually, they've been sent flying!>> [Host]
<<That's most likely it for participant Takebayashi>> [Analyst]

Around this time, Ryouma, who just had his slave demons sent flying, quietly muttered, "Not yet."

Ryouma ordered the slimes inside his mind as the slimes landed near the center of the battle between the other beasts.

In that place that was almost the center of the battle, the slimes bared their fangs!

<<W-What is that!? A purple mist suddenly came out of nowhere! The mist is swallowing the other beasts in it. Their movements are getting worse, and —— they fainted!? Participant Horizon's galmos alligator has been paralyzed!?>>

The host gave a play-by-play of the battles as the other magical beasts ran away from the mist. Unfortunately, for those who were snarling at others or for those who were too slow to react, they couldn't run away in time. The galmos alligator was one of those.

It was here that the analyst then explained the situation.

<<This is definitely poison magic. I do believe we have seen other beasts use magic in the tournament, but I don't think there's any who can use poison in this match…>> [Analyst]
<<Ah!? There is! I-It's actually the slime! The beast responsible for this mist is none other than the slime that was sent flying by the galmos alligator's tail whip a while ago!>> [Analyst]

A commotion stirred within the spectators when the analyst said that, and they tried to make out the slime from within that purple mist.

<<How could a slime be responsible for this?>> [Host]
<<…It's true that it's rare for a slime to be able to use magic, but there are definitely those that can. For example, poisonous marshes where poison-attribute magic jewels can be found are inhabited by poison slimes, and although rare, the slimes that can use poison magic, the portion slimes. It seems that inside that dazzling, silver-colored slime is a portion slime. As for what that silver slime is, it's most likely a slime that possesses a metallic body, a metal slime.>> [Analyst]
<<I see! I see! So the portion slime is hidden inside the metal slime, which is why it was able to endure the attack of the galmos alligator, correct?>> [Host]
<<There's no other explanation.>> [Analyst]

Hearing the explanation of the analyst, the host immediately exaggerated the facts, hyping the crowd even more.

<<What an unexpected development! Participant Takebayashi's slimes are actually putting up a good fight! More and more magical beasts are falling to the slime's magic. This is truly a fight you can't keep your eyes off!>> [Host]

Just as the man had said, the magical beasts were falling one after another due to the poison of the portion slime. If they weren't inside the arena, they would've long been able to run away, but unfortunately for them, the area they could run to is limited, so there were some who couldn't find a place to run to anymore.

On the bright side, the portion slime's mist only contained a strong sedative, so there was relatively no danger to the beasts' lives.

"Forfeit! I'm forfeiting!" [Participant 1]
"Me too!" [Male Participant 1]

Because of this, the opposing beasts received damage that couldn't be ignored. And some of their owners even started forfeiting. But, of course, not everyone did.

"Bite it!" [Participant 2]

As that voice echoed out, a three-headed snake attacked the slime. It was the Trident Snake who entered into the arena right before Ryouma. This magical beast possesses strong resistance against poison, so it can move freely even

inside the poison mist.

“Sha!!”
“GUoOO!”

The trident snake coiled around the slime, and its three heads bit at it. But because its fangs literally couldn’t penetrate through the iron slime’s iron skin, it failed to poison the slime. This is despite the fact that the trident snake wasn’t just a poisonous magical beast. Around this time, another magical beast jumped in. It was like a stripe-less leopard, and its sharp claws ferociously struck out.

“Kisha! …a.”

But what got hit wasn’t the slime, but the trident snake coiled around it. The slime it was really aiming for was left unhurt. On top of the fact that slimes couldn’t be killed unless their nucleus was directly harmed, because of the hardness and the roundness of the iron slime’s metallic body, the magical beast’s attack could only slip.

Moreover, because of Ryouma’s straining, the metallic body of the iron slime was now impervious to penetration. Even blades couldn’t cut it unless struck properly, only being able to slip on its iron skin. On the contrary…

“GIaUn!?”

When the magical beast thought to crush the slime underfoot, it ended up breaking its own balance, hitting its own nose hard against the floor.

Physical attacks came one after another after that, but they all could only slip on the slime’s skin. If not slip, then dodged by the slime with a mobility unlike any normal slime. At one point, the slime’s poison strongly affected a large-type magical beast, causing it to jump back, and hit itself on the head of another magical beast… All the magical beasts aside from the slime were accumulating damage after damage.

“GAa—!!?”
<<Now what!?>> [Host]
<<Ah, that looks painful…>> [Analyst]

At the cry of a magical beast, the spectators and the commentators turned their heads. Without having noticed it, apparently, that iron slime and portion

slime that have become the center of attention have managed to find themselves at the edge of the arena with the bear magical beast, the black bear.

The black bear was tumbling and standing on its two legs, restlessly rampaging around. As it opened its mouth wide, a silver-colored ball could be seen inside with thin needles protruding out of it, prickling the corners of the black bear's mouth.

<<Erm… This too is because of Participant Takebayashi's slimes.>> [Host]
<<Indeed. That black bear tried to bite the slime, but instead, it changed its form into needles. To have a ball of needles inside of one's mouth… what a terrifying magical beast.>> [Analyst]
<<Who would've thought slimes could actually be capable of that…>> [Host]
<<It's my first time seeing such a thing too actually. They must've practiced a lot.>> [Analyst]

Every spectator within the arena couldn't help but change their appraisal of Ryouma's slimes. But even then, for Ryouma, this was just the beginning. When Ryouma gave his next instruction, the iron slime that had been protecting the mimic slime all this time changed its form.

That form that could be said to be a chestnut's cupule suddenly jumped.

"Huh?" [Spectators]

All the spectators fixed on the now midair slime. Then without any warning, it suddenly shot off. It danced about in the air, dodging the poison mist and the attacks of other magical beasts as it attacked the spore butterflies who were busy spraying digestive liquids. Because of these the four spore butterflies were heavily damaged by the iron slime's needles, and they all fell to the ground.

<<Can you explain exactly what just happened?>> [Host]
<<Unfortunately, I don't understand either. Why is a metal slime able to fly…?>> [Analyst]

Looks like even the analyst is at a loss. But then a different analyst suddenly showed up.

<<That's a mana slime's magic!>> [???]
<<Mana Slime? Do you know anything about it? Or– wait a moment, who are

you anyway?>> [Host]
<<Please excuse me. I am the magical beast researcher and adventurer, Raypin. I was preparing for a job when I coincidentally found myself here in the arena.>> [Raypin]
<<Thank you for your service. So… what is this about mana slimes?>> [Host]
<<Just as the analyst had explained with the portion slime a while ago, the mana slime is a slime that uses magic. Only, it doesn't use poison magic, but neutral magic. I believe that needle ball of a slime used neutral magic to fly.>>
<<I see.>> [Analyst]
<<Thank you for explanations.>> [Host]

Hearing that Ryouma said to himself, "The magic is certainly telepathy, but the type of slime is wrong… Or rather, Raypin-san, just what exactly are you doing there?"

Ryouma was surprised when he suddenly heard an acquaintance's voice, but he shrugged it off, and gave his slimes another order, causing the crowd to go crazy.

This match is a battle royal. Even if Ryouma doesn't directly fight the other magical beasts, the number would naturally decrease.

Also, while Ryouma is indeed raising the mana slime that Raypin spoke of, the slime Ryouma brought out in this tournament is not the mana slime, but the mimic slime. As for why, it was for insurance in case the portion slime ran out of magic power. In which case, the mimic slime would then transform into Rai to secure the victory.

But seeing this situation now, there was no need. He didn't really want to use that method anyway, so this situation is favorable for him. As he was thinking that, a dull sound vibrated throughout the arena.

That was the sound of the biggest magical beast falling. No matter how big a magical beast may be, and no matter how difficult it might be to poison, once enough toxicity has accumulated, it would certainly fall. This is true even for Ryouma who has poison resistance.

And then——

<<After a hard fought battle, the winner for the 24th round of the

preliminaries is – who would've thought – none other than the slime user, Participant Ryouma Takebayashi!>>

Like this cheers were showered on Ryouma as his advancement to the main tournament was decided.

Chapter 22: After the Preliminaries

After securing the victory, I waved to the audience as I left the arena. The official led me to a different room from the waiting room awhile a go. Inside the room was a chair and a desk.

The official offered me a seat, so I sat facing him.

“Congratulations for breaking through the preliminaries.” [Official]
“Thank you very much.” [Ryouma]
“I will be taking a sheet of paper from this box for Takebayashi-sama.” [Official]

As the official said that, he slid a box with a hole on top of it just big enough for a hand to fit in. He then took a huge sheet of paper from underneath the desk and spread it before me. On it were 32 boxes, 23 of which were already filled. I had an inkling of what was going on as soon as I saw the box, and as expected, it really was drawing lots to decide the opponent for the main tournament.

After the official explained the details surrounding the box, confirming my suspicions, I drew a lot. Number 32 was written on the paper I drew. I handed it to the official, and as soon as he saw it, he wrote my name on the right most box.

The semifinals and finals will be held the day after tomorrow, so if everything go well tomorrow, I’ll be participating in three matches all in all.

“Takebayashi-sama, your match will be the last match of the first round, and will be against Podro-sama.” [Official]

Podro… That should be the winner of the first match. Looks like I’ll be fighting with that reindeer… It should be fine. I can think of several winning strategies and there’s no limit to the number of slave demons I can use, so I’ll be able to go all out.

Besides, my goal is to publicize the big slime anyway. So long as I’m able to

expose it to as many people as possible, it doesn't really matter who I fight. Even just showing the big slime in the main tournament is enough to complete my goals to some extent.

I don't plan on easing up on my opponents, but my main goal was still to break through the preliminaries. Since I've already accomplished that, it could be said that I've already climbed the mountain. While I was being optimistic, I took a look at the names of the participants written on the paper.

I know the first 16 since I was watching them, but there are also names that I don't know. Those ones are probably the ones who had their matches while I was in the waiting room.

"Hmm? ……Why is he?"

As I was reading the names of the participants near my turn, a certain name caught my attention. It was facing directly opposite my name. It read: Matthew.

"Excuse me. This Matthew here, is this the same Matthew as the tamer guild's…" [Ryouma]
"Yes, that's correct. That is certainly Matthew-sama of the Tamer Guild Gimuru Branch. He won the 22nd match, 2 matches before Takebayashi-sama's." [Official]

So it was him. Why exactly is that guy even participating?

"Is there something the matter?" [Official]
"Oh, uh, it's nothing actually. I was just wondering how someone as busy as the guild master would be able to find time to join the tournament." [Ryouma]

When I said that, the official wryly smiled and answered.

"From what I've heard, Matthew-sama took a three-day leave. It's great for us since it'll hype up the tournament, but the person himself seems really troubled…" [Official]
"I see…" [Ryouma]

Well considering his current situation, I guess it's not too strange… I've also had my pay cut in my previous life. And when I tried to petition it, they just got mad at me… That's not to say that I'm planning to save him or anything, but I can at least sympathize.

After that, I finished up on the rest of the paper work, had the explanations explained to me again, and then went back on stage for the spectators where someone suddenly called out my name.

“Ryouma-san!” [Elia]
“Elia?” [Ryouma]

I looked toward the source of the voice, and there I saw Sebasu-san and Elia. They congratulated me on my victory.

“Thank you very much. But why are you guys here?” [Ryouma]
“We came here to invite you. If you feel like watching the tournament, how about coming to watch with us?” [Elia]

Oh, I see. She’s sitting in the noble seats where many rich people and nobles are. That being the case, the security must be quite tight. If so, then even if we tried to meet up, it should be a difficult task if I were to be the one to look for them.

I accepted Elia’s favor and watched the tournament from the noble seats. When I entered into the noble section, the other four girls congratulated me as well. After that, the next match started, so all our attentions moved toward the stage.

And as usual, the arena from up top looked no different from hell. Seeing all these magical beasts lined up sure is interesting though. What’s more, the noble seats are a completely different experience from the time in the morning when I was just standing. In here, I can really focus on the match. Thanks to that, time flew by quickly… I only got to watch four matches from the noble seats, but it was fun.

After all the matches finished, we decided to have supper together. So as usual, we went to the Slime Den Restaurant, but…

“We’re really sorry, but the waiting time is —— Ah! Owner!” [Waiter]

We didn’t have any prior reservations. I wonder if the wait is going to be long.

“Is something the matter?” [Ryouma]
“Matter? Of course there is! I heard all about your deeds, owner! I heard you broke through the preliminaries! Everyone’s already ready upstairs, you know?”

[Waiter]
“Eh? What are you talking about?” [Ryouma]
“Huh? Didn’t you come for the victory party?” [Waiter]

It felt like we were talking about two different topics, so I asked him about the details for a bit, and apparently, the researchers who came to watch my match called the people around them, and prepared a victory party. So the entire second floor has apparently been reserved.

Focusing my ears a bit, I do actually hear a lot of voices from the second floor. It’s almost as if they were the ones who fought and won… They’re as lively as those foreigners I see on TV back in my previous life who would drink in a pub and watch soccer.

“It can’t be helped. Let’s go to a different store.” [Ryouma]
“Ryouma-san, it’s your party though. Is that alright?” [Elia]

There’s no way I could peacefully eat if I went into all that ruckus. With that excuse, we left the Slime Den Restaurant. The place we headed to was a restaurant in the northern part of the first city. It’s the store beside the liquor store from which I buy barrels of wine from every week. Their stews are really good.

After ordering some bread, stew, and one or two more items the others liked, I asked Kanan-san about the magic tool that caught my interest this afternoon.

“Mass producing magic tools? Well, it’s not impossible.” [Kanan]

In order to recreate a magic tool, the original first needs to be analyzed. After finding out how the original magic is used, the magic craftsman then needs to learn the same magic. After which he’ll then be able to create a magic tool just like the original. Analyzing and researching takes a lot of time though.

“In my house’s case, we put a lot of effort on every product, so we don’t mass produce. But for the army and noble-marketed manufacturers, they make things in bulk.” [Kanan]

So that’s how it is… As we were talking, our orders arrived. The stew and the soup are both dishes that’ve already been prepared in advanced, so our order came quickly.

When the food arrived, we changed our topic. We talked about my match instead.

“So, what do you think your odds are tomorrow?” [Michelle]
“There’s no telling unless I get to it. But I do have a plan.” [Ryouma]

My opponent tomorrow is that barbell reindeer. There are three things I need to keep an eye out for. Its horn, its electric magic, and its hooves.

I can use the electric slime to deal with the electric magic. The electric slime has such high resistance against electric magic that it nullifies it, but in exchange, it’s weak against physical attacks. But as long as it uses its magic it should be fine.

Moreover, my electric slime is able to use my personally created magic to defend against electric magic. It’s called ‘Ground’. In this magic, the practitioner covers himself in electric magic power to create a path of electricity overwriting the trajectory of the original electric magic, allowing him to dodge it.

It’s a magic I happened upon when after practicing Magic Perception I realized that there was a small difference in sensing the differing attributes. I can’t quite put it into words, but I was finally able to figure it out in these past two years. Moreover, I’ve also become able to sense the magic power floating in the air or in the surroundings so long as I use Magic Perception.

And then one day, when the electric slime used its electric magic to hit against a practice target, I coincidentally noticed that the electric attribute magic power follows a path.

To give some examples. The intermediate magic ‘Thunder Bolt’ follows a straight path ntil impact, whereas the elementary magic ‘Stun’ doesn’t, but in exchange, it can’t be shot.

After some thinking, I wondered, wouldn’t it be possible to create the same effect that electric magic power does wherein it calls lightning via the electric potential difference? My mind on fire, I experimented for several days with my Magic Perception. The object of my experimentation was the electric slime along with my personally created light bulb and vacuum tube (diode).

I once created a radio using a vacuum tube in my previous life, so using that

knowledge, I took a metal pipe and a filament created from bamboo. I took the sticky slime's hardening liquid plank, changed its shape, and then I set it inside the pipe. Then using alchemy, I made the pipe airtight, creating myself a diode. I then let electricity pass through it to confirm my theory. When I saw the movement of electricity inside I was able to confirm the movement of electric attribute magic power.

But then again, considering the fact that the elementary magic 'Stun Arrow' would create the shape of an arrow with electricity, this result is only natural. If anything, the bigger question should be why I didn't realize it until now. Is it because I got used to it and just accepted that it works? Hmm… It seems the common sense of this world in regards to magic has also affected me.

Going back to the topic.

In any case, my point is that the combination of the big poison slime and the electric slime which can defend against long range attacks and electric magic should prove an interesting matchup against that barbell reindeer.

I talked like this we Elia and the others as we had our supper. After we finished eating, we went our separate ways.

The Next Day.

In the summer heat when the sun's rays were at their peak, the spectator's fervor burned even fiercer. The matches proceeded one after another, and when the sun was finally at its highest, my turn came.

<<In the last match of the first round~ The unexpected tamer who brought out a slime, Ryouma Takebayashi! Will he, again, in this tournament, make some waves!?>>

Those words were a signal, so I went ahead and walked toward the stages, leading my 20 big poison slimes, each of which was wielding a spear upon which an electric slime was riding on.

<<What is this crowd of slimes!? They're big, a part of their body is stretching, and they even have a spear!?>>
<<…>>

Shocked, the host couldn't help but exclaim as his gaze turned toward the analyst. But the analyst was staring stiff at the big poison slimes, not a word leaving his lips. Seeing that, the host tried to shake the analyst awake.

<<Analyst, analyst, snap out of it!>>

The host tried to whisper the words, but he was using a magic tool, so his voice still resounded throughout the arena. Because of this, the spectators all noticed the oddity in the analyst's behavior. The crowd was silenced.

<<What's going on? Analyst, hello?>>
<<Ah, r-right! Sorry for that! Umm… The slime participant Takebayashi is bringing with him right now is…>>
<<Is?>>
<<I-If my eyes aren't deceiving me, those should be the… big poison… slimes.>>

At those words, all eyes gathered on me. The host didn't seem to have any knowledge on big slimes, so he asked the analyst.

<<So those're the big poison slimes. What kind of magical beast are those?>>
<<A higher class of slimes. It could be said to be a more advanced poison slime. Just like the portion slime from yesterday, they can be found in poisonous lands every now and then, but they don't have much difference to poison slimes in terms of their mode of life.

It is said that these big poison slime have strong resistance against physical attacks>>
<<So that's how it is~>>
<<But! What's really shocking isn't this.>>
<<Then what is it?>>

An audible gulp could be heard from the analyst as he prepared to drop the bomb.

<<What's shocking is that big slimes and poison slimes should be untameable!>>
<<Untameable? But how can that be? The poison slime is right here before our very yes. Moreover, they're lined up and are following Participant Takebayashi. There are even two lines. No matter how you look at it, they have definitely been tamed――>>

<<Let me revise that. It was said to be untameable. There should've been research being done on how to tame them, but there hasn't been a single successful case until now!>>

At those words, the host finally understood the situation. With a grave voice, he slowly spoke.

<<In other words…>>
<<Participant Takebayashi has just accomplished a world-shattering feat as the big slime has – for the first time in history – been successfully tamed! And today, Participant Takebayashi will, on this very stage, before the public, show us the power of the big slimes!>>

The crowd exploded. The hype spread like fire as the crowd chanted one after another, "World First!" After having calmed himself, the analyst added, "although their might have been other cases that just weren't publicized…" but no ears heard him. Well, this turn of events is really good for us though.

<<———!? ———!!!!>>

In the hype, even the host couldn't help but cheer out loud. But with the magic tool by his mouth, the resulting cheer drowned out the entire arena, and everyone had to block their ears. When the echoes finally stopped, the whole arena had gone quiet.

<<Sorry about that. I was so excited, and I completely forgot about the magic tool. In any case, ladies and gentlemen, it seems that the tournament has just gotten even more interesting! Now on the other corner, facing Participant Takebayashi!>>

The host gave a few words of apology, and then he went ahead and introduced my opponent. I wonder if he's still not used to the magic tool. But then again it would've been hard for him to introduce my opponent if those cheers continued… was it calculated?

During this time, the introduction of my opponent, Podro, and his barbell reindeer continued. Darn, snap out of it, me! I came here to win!

After fixing my attitude, I waited for my opponent. But I couldn't see him at all. I thought he'd already entered after the host spoke, but he's nowhere to be

seen. Gradually, the crowd started to noisy.

<<Umm… According to this information we've just received, Participant Podro's barbell reindeer had apparently fainted. Supposedly, it's because the barbell reindeer is from the snowy mountains, so it couldn't take the heat.>>

Huh? What is this announcer saying?

<<Because of Participant Podro's forfeiture, Participant Takebayashi will be getting a free win!>>

The crowd went silent. Then in the next instant, jeers filled the arena.

"Bullshit!"
"Get up the stage and fight!"
"Give me back my money! I bet on you!"

…Well, this was unexpected. And here I was talking all confident to Elia and the others. Who would've thought I'd get a free win.

I even fired myself up. Following the official's command, I left the arena with the slimes. They looked disappointed too.

"And we even practiced our spear last night. Sigh…" [Ryouma]

…But the slimes remained silent. Sigh… just more pointless stuff.

Chapter 23: Main Tournament

After I got a free win in my first match, I was given a room to wait in until my next match. I still have two matches to go for the day. Maybe I should have the big poison slimes and the electric slimes come out in the next match since they weren't able to come out in the last match.

There aren't a lot of people participating in the match, so apparently I can go outside so long as I'm willing to go through a search again… It's a bit early, but maybe I should go out.

Someone knocked on the door.

"Please enter." [Ryouma]
"Excuse me." [???]

Might be related to the big poison slime… I replied while being a little wary, and a man about 20 years old opened the door. As soon as he entered the door, he paused in his tracks. The room's full of slimes, so I can understand. That aside, what is he up to? Hmm?

"If I'm not mistaken, you should be my opponent for my first match." [Ryouma]
"Yes, my name is Podro. I am truly sorry for what just happened!" [Podro]

What is he going on about?

After talking for hi m a bit, I found out that he came here to apologize because of all the booing in the stage. I don't really mind though…

"Don't mind it, after all, it's because your slave demon got sick. And besides, it's not like they said anything to me." [Ryouma]

The ones they were booing at were the management and Podro-san. It's not like I was a target or anything. Podro-san looked relieved when I said that, although he also looked tired.

“That aside, how’s your side doing?” [Ryouma]
“I’m fine. Riguris should also be able to move again after a little rest.” [Podro]

By Riguris he probably means the reindeer. If he’s already feeling well then that’s good. Podro-san mentioned he’d be leaving for home tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, and when I asked him, “Isn’t that a little quick?” his face darkened.

From thereon, Podro-san started explaining why he joined the tournament in the first place.

Podro-san comes from the northernmost areas of the country, high up in the mountain ranges where the lands are always covered in snow and ice. Ice-attribute magic jewels could be mined there, so despite it being remote, there’s a trading network connecting their village to a lot of other villages.

Podro-san works as a courier with his slave demon, travelling to different villages all the way to the foot of the mountain.

“I’ve been working as a courier with my dad ever since I was kid, but two years ago after I contracted with Riguris, the area I’ve been covering has grown bigger. So I thought I’d try going down the mountains.” [Podro]

So he doesn’t just look young, he also thinks young… Or rather, the farthest he’s gotten to all his life was actually the base of their mountain?

“So you decided to go to Gimuru?” [Ryouma]
“Yes. When I heard there was going to be a magic beast tournament, I thought it was a good opportunity. But it was a lot hotter here than what I’ve heard, and my body got worse and worse ever since the preliminaries ended… This morning, I decided I couldn’t continue with tournament… I’ve unnecessarily pushed Riguris too far.” [Podro]

I think I heard from somewhere before that the temperature drops by 0.06C every 100m ascended. Since it’s winter all year, the mountain might be as high as Mt. Fuji. I don’t know how big the difference is, but there should be a huge difference compared to Gimuru.

Yeah~ It’s definitely better for him to go home as soon as possible. But at this rate, he might faint along the way, and more than anything, he’s in no condition

to fight if he were to encounter some bandits or magic beasts. He's a bit reckless, but he seems to be a good person, I can't just leave him alone… Oh, I know!

I took out a memo paper and pen from my luggage, and wrote a request to the training facility asking for a bed and help from an ice magician. I'm in the middle of the tournament right now, so I can't help directly, but I can at least introduce him to someone who could help.

As I explained that to him and handed the letter, Podro-san bowed his many times, thanking me. When he first heard I was a tamer, he had immediately thought of the ruffians of the tamer guild. The tamer guild Podro-san comes from has a completely different atmosphere from the one in Gimuru, so he was a bit prejudiced.

I asked him if it was really that different and he said that in the tamer guild he comes from, no one would make fun of you just because you have a weak slave demon. Of course, there were also the guild master's policies, but it was in a remote place after all, so if you were to do something like that your life would become difficult. They had a strong sense of camaraderie.

After that, an official informed me that there are some people wishing to talk about the big slimes, but I couldn't talk on just my own discretion, so I had her inform them to talk to the research facility instead.

I left the arena later to pick out the slimes I will be taking with me, then after going through the inspection again, I went back. I drank tea and sat cross-legged to focus my mind while waiting for an official to call me.

My opponent this time went up the stage before me. He was a pretty boy named Jano, who practiced conjuration and is popularly known as the "Heavenly Noble". I've also heard of him before. He only uses flying-type magical beasts. In the preliminaries he used the C Rank bird-type magical beast, Nip Bird. This time, on top of his Nip Bird, he also has a wyvern with him. It's currently arching over him as if to protect him.

I've seen wyverns before, but it's my first time seeing the nip bird. Its beak is sharp like a dril, and it moves like a kingfisher. It fights by rushing to its foe and piercing it with its beak. According to the analyst, it has a kind of poison in its

saliva that prevents blood from coagulating. Wild nip birds apparently feast on the bled carcasses of their preys.

Aside from the bleeding there's no other effect. It's enough to use healing magic to block the wound so as long as one takes care not to get wounded again. So it's not too hard to deal with when there's a healer.

<<Our next participant had a free win in the first match, so who knows what kind of power he has in store for us! How will the slimes fight against the flying magical beasts of Participant Jano! Participant Ryouma Takebayashi enters!!>>

Taking the 20 big poison slimes with me that I intended to showcase in the previous match along with 10 electric slimes, 10 flame slimes, and 10 wind slimes, all of which was wrapped with an iron slime, totaling to 80 slimes all in all, I entered the stage.

Our opponent this time is flying, so we'll have to focus on using magic attacks. The big poison slimes are here just in case it becomes a melee, but I doubt they'll have much of a role here.

The analyst and the host grew noisy when I entered, but I already knew that they'd react to some extent considering how many slimes I have with me, so I didn't really mind. Like that I took my position, and readied myself for battle.

My slimes were arranged with the magic-using slimes at the center, while the big poison slimes have them surrounded, forming a circle around them. With this, the poison slimes will become a wall, protecting the magic slimes from all direction except from above. The magic slimes are being defended by the iron slimes, so I'll just have them use magic to protect themselves from above.

As the host's voice resounded throughout the arena, the time for the battle to begin neared. The wyvern of the enemy flapped the wings attached to its forelegs, blowing the wind as it hovered up in the sky. Flying beasts are limited to flying only as far as the arena goes. They're not allowed to fly over the spectators, so the place might be a bit narrow for it. I wonder if this counts as an advantage… Hmm, or is too minor? Oops, the match is starting.

<<Round 2 —— Start !!>>

Immediately after the announcement, several nip birds flew to restrain my

side. Before I could even give out commands, the big poison slimes swung their spears, but the nip birds were able to dodge, and hit them. After stabbing through the big poison slimes, the nip birds returned to the sky. As for the others who tried to penetrate the magic slimes, they couldn't get pass the iron slimes' armor, so they also returned to the sky.

<<The first to attack are the nip birds!>>
<<Their speed is really hard to follow. They should be able to kill the slimes so long as they're able to hit their nucleus. It appears, they missed this time around.>>

Just as the analyst said, the nip birds were about to be hit by the spears, so they had to change the directions to attack. The big poison slimes were able to avoid a fatal hit by moving their nucleus inside their body, but they weren't able to counterattack.

"But you know…" [Ryouma]

A few seconds after I mumbled to myself, the nip birds that attacked the big poison slimes all suddenly lost momentum. In the next moment, they fell to the ground, one after another.

<<What's going on? Some of the nip birds are suddenly falling!>>

Well yeah, because… you know~

"The ones they hit just now are the big poison slimes." [Ryouma]

They're slimes that generate poison, so in essence, they're actually lumps of poison. Attacking them with magic or poison aside, piercing into them with your head is bound to hurt. I did order them to only use paralyzing poison beforehand though, so I don't think the birds are going to die.

"Guo!" [Wyvern]

The sound of wings being flapped resounded as the wyvern dived for the magic slimes. Immediately, I ordered the sliems to fight back with magic.

"GyA!?" [Wyvern]

<<This time the slimes are firing fire and electric magic! Shocked, the wyvern could only retreat! Both sides seem to be waiting for each other.>>

<<Just like the portion slime in the preliminaries, it would appear that in this match, there are flame slimes and electric slimes hidden. With this, even if the birds and the wyvern fly to the sky, they won't be safe. Hunting flying-types from the ground with magic is a common practice amongst adventurers.>>

Just as the analyst said, the other side is waiting for us… But if this keeps up, we'll end up glaring at each other the whole time. It can't be helped, we'll be the first to attack.

I put the wind slimes that haven't attacked yet on standby as I ordered the flame slimes and the electric slimes to attack. Their targets are the wings of the nip birds and wyvern nearby. The magic slimes moved around as they shot magic, making it impossible for the enemy to figure out which slime was casting which magic.

<<Participant Takebayashi's slimes are making a move! Magic is being shot one after another! No matter how you look at this, over 10 slimes are attacking Participant Jano's magical beasts!>>
<<Magic-using slimes are really rare… He did an amazing job being able to gather so much… Participant Takebayashi is indeed worthy of admiration.>>

Except, I evolved them. For people who don't know that, they could only see the slimes as something I searched all over for.

After suffering some losses, Participant Jano finaly made a move. The nip birds flew from all directions. From the side, from above, they surrounded the slimes completely. And in between opening of that formation, the wyvern attacked the magic slimes covered by iron slimes.

<<An exchange of offense and defense between the wyvern and the slimes is unfolding!>>
<<The nip birds are ill matched with Participant Takebayashi's slimes. But the slimes also have a hard time dealing with the nip birds' speed. There's just no telling who will win.>>

We can just leave the nip birds alone. As for the wyvern, the slimes are hitting it with magic, but it's being careful and not attacking. It's only skillfully dodging the slimes' attacks. If this keeps up, this battle will never end.

The slimes will have to use up a significant amount of magic power, but it's

necessary for this battle to be concluded before they run out of magic power.

So I ordered the flame slimes and the wind slimes to match their timing, and use their magic. The magic I want them to use is the intermediate fire magic, ‘Flame Bomb’, and the my original wind magic, ‘Sound Bomb’.

As for why I want them to use these two magic at the same time, that’s because ‘Sound Bomb’ can easily suppress the enemy when properly used. But it’s easy to misuse, so I don’t plan on spreading it. It could easily catch on, so I have to be prudent with using it. That thought grew stronger in me as I continued to use it against bandits. When I’m using it before people, I make sure to hide it behind the explosive noise of ‘Flame Bomb’.

At my orders, one of the flame slimes used ‘Flame Bomb’, aiming for the wyvern up above. The wyvern tried to dodge, but the wind slime casted ‘Sound Bomb’ at the same moment the ball of fire detonated, giving rise to a thunderous roar that resounded throughout the arena.

<<What a powerful attack! You can tell just from the sound it makes. Participant Jano’s wyvern managed to doge the attack, but got caught up in the explosion! And what is this? The wyvern is falling!?>>
<<It’s only falling, so it should’ve been able to escape the attack. But it’s movements are clearly odd. It might have incurred some damage in the attack just now.>>

Good! It’s a success!

Participant Jano called out to the wyvern, but the wyvern couldn’t move as it wanted to. Nothing letting this opportunity pass, I ordered the big poison slimes to pursue.

<<The wyvern is frantically moving its forelegs and tail, but its movements are too wide! It can’t catch the opponents like this. The big poison slimes easily dodged the wyverns attack as they struck back with their spears!>>
<<The wyvern was by nature unsuited for battle on land after all. It’s a C Rank magical beast, but once it’s unable to fly, it’ll have a hard time even against D Rank advneturers.>>

Exactly as the analyst said, the wyvern was now moving poorly. The big poison slimes were making full use of their flexible body. They bent down to the ground

like a puddle of water, they changed their shapes, and dodged the enemy wyvern's attacks.

And the slimes that doged the wyvern's attacks immediately struck back with their spears. The wyvern's scales blocked the spear, but the slimes kept hitting. Once, twice, thrice… Enraged, the wyvern lashed out and broke free from the combo, but the slimes readied their spears once again.

<<Looks like the wyvern is having a hard time. If this keeps up, the wyvern would undoubtedly lose! Will the wyvern be able to counterattack?>>

The host's voice resounded throughout the arena, hyping the crowd, but as the slimes continued their attacks, gradually, a crack started to form at the wyvern's scales. Wyvern scales were light to begin with for the sake of flight. They were not like the dragons, their scales were brittle. If they were to be hit in the same spot over and over again, the spear would eventually reach the flesh. But even then, it wouldn't be easy to defeat the wyvern.

The deadlock continued for about two more minutes. And as everyone was focused on the movements of the wyverns, the big poison slimes, and Participant Jano——

<<The wyvern fainted!>>

After the spear struck at the wyvern relentlessly one after another, the poison entered the wyvern's body, and eventually it fainted. When the wyvern fainted, Participant Jano immediately raised his hand and resigned.

<<Winner, Ryouma Takebayashi!>>

The host quickly announced my victory, and the crowd showered me with cheers. After I waved back to the crowd, I walked over to Participant Jano and shook his hand.

We exchanged a few words, but Participant Jano was not a disagreeable pretty boy. After we shook hands, I returned to the waiting room and prepared for the next match.

And then the third match came.

<<Third Round ——— Begin!>>

Before me were 40 ghouls and 20 wraiths. My opponent for the third round utilized a large number of undead-type magical beast. He was the type to use his advantage in numbers to bulldoze his way to victory. I got information beforehand that he was an undead user, so I had already prepared 20 big grave slimes for him.

<<Participant Takebayashi against an army of magical beasts three times his own camp! How will he get through this!?>>

How? Eh… Against the grave slimes all these undead are just sitting ducks. Ghouls attack with their nails or with their teeth, melee, in other words. Wraiths on the other hand are immune against physical attacks. The wraiths flew over my slimes, but as soon as they did, my slimes just swallowed them.

My opponent panicked and seemed to want to order them to stop, but my big grave slimes were using the Attract Ghosts skill. The contracted ghouls didn't gather around the sliems, but it did have some effect, causing their movements to become poorer.

I guess they want to gather around the slimes, but they can't because of the order – that sort of feeling? The ghouls now were no faster than zombies because of the grave slimes. That was more than enough for the big grave slimes to start hunting the ghouls.

With their numbers largely reduced, my opponent panicked, and he had the B Rank magical beast, dullahan, enter the fray, but it just had its weapons taken away from it, and then its legs, waist, torso, neck… were all swallowed one-sidedly.

The magical beast, roam weapon, was mixed in with the dullahan's weapons, and it tried to take the slimes by surprise, but it too was one-sidedly swallowed by the grave slime. The only things left were the dullahan's unmoving armor and the few surviving wraiths that managed to run away to the sky before being swallowed.

The spectators, the host, everyone was shocked. They never expected this sort of development. Suddenly, the big grave slime made a 'pe!' sound as it spit out the roam weapon. The roam weapon was no longer able to move.

At this point, my opponent just collapsed to his knees, and the match ended.

<<Ahh, it’s a complete domination!! How far will the slime-user’s smooth sailing continue!? Participant Takebayashi is proceeding to the semifinals!!!>>

After collecting himself, the host announced my victory. While bathed in the cheers of the crowd, I left the stage. My opponent this time was completely shocked and didn’t look like he was in the mood to shake hands, so I just left.

When I got back to the waiting room, I casually mumbled.

“…I knew I was fighting with an advantage, but who would’ve thought it would be this one-sided…” [Ryouma]

When I think about it, aren’t the slimes the strongest when it comes to tournaments?

Getting information became a cinch after passing through the preliminaries. And the slimes themselves have such great variety. Unless my opponent hides their cards, I could just easily use the information to pick the best combination of slimes, and use that to win… but am I the only one who can pull off that sort of fighting style?

Well, whatever. In any case, the point is that I managed to win. With this, the tournament for today is over. Next is the semifinal tomorrow. I won’t be able to have as big of an advantage as I did in the last match where I was able to take advantage of the opponent’s affinity, so this last fight will be a head-on confrontation.

Chapter 24: Semifinals

On the morning of the third day of the magic beast tournament when the semifinals and finals were to be held.

“We’re cheering for you! Beat ‘em in one hit!” [Fan 1]
“Do your best!” [Fan 2]
“Be careful!” [Fan 3]

News of Ryouma’s advance to the semifinal had already spread all over town. More and more people were calling out to him now even he was just taking a walk.

“Thank you very much! I’ll do my best! I’ll be careful!” [Ryouma]

As Ryouma honestly replied, he left the first town. He entered the second town while eating his skewered meat. Then with his dimension magic, he teleported to the service entrance of the arena. Onee by one, he brought out of his ‘Dimension Home’ five king sticky slimes. He also took out a poison slime and a medicine slime.

“I’ll be relying on you guys today.” [Ryouma]

Ryouma caressed each and every one of his slimes as he said that. After that, he called out to the official inside the service entrance.

“Good morning.” [Ryouma]
“Good morning, Takebayashi-sama. Please put on a good show for us today as well.” [Official]
“I’ll do my best. Will you be searching me?” [Ryouma]
“I’ll call the person-in-charge, so please wait for a moment.” [Official]

As the official went inside, Ryouma caressed his slimes and waited. While he was waiting, Ryouma suddenly noticed a particular man entering through the service entrance.

(…An annoying one came.)

That man was none other than the tamer guild's top senior – although it was only on paper – Matthew!

"You're…" [Matthew]
"Good morning, Branch Head Matthew." [Ryouma]

Matthew gritted his teeth when he saw Ryouma, but Ryouma continued to act civil on the outside. After a few seconds of staring at each other, Matthew weakly spoke.

"So even a bastard like you managed to get through the main tournament…" [Matthew]
"Fortunately. Speaking of which, I hear you've been busy lately. Is everything alright at work?" [Ryouma]
"I'm taking a break!" [Matthew]

Ryouma quickly changed his way of thinking when he saw Matthew since, after all, it wasn't strange to meet him here. Instead, he wanted to ask him why he would show up in the tournament, but before he could, Matthew overreacted when Ryouma mentioned hms being busy at work. That topic was apparently a taboo for Matthew right now.

"I see." [Ryouma]

It's not like Ryouma was really that interested, so he just left it alone. Silence continued on again for some time, but before long, Matthew started grumbling as if he was cursing someone or something.

"Annoying… When I think about it… I've gotten this far… What assistant? If I don't win… I won't have anything left." [Matthew]
(…Him grumbling like that coupled with how dark the service entrance is sure makes for a creepy atmosphere. And what does he mean by 'If I don't win I won't have anything left?'… The winning prize is only enough to cover some living expenses, right? Did he do something desperate?)

Inside that unfavorable atmosphere, Ryouma looked up ahead, praying for the official to come faster. And as luck would have it, perhaps his prayer did have some effect, as the official came not long afte.

“Sorry for the wait.” [Official]
“Please take care of us.” [Ryouma]
“Then let’s begin.” [Official]

Having felt the dangerous atmosphere, the official quickly searched Ryouma. After confirming that Ryouma didn’t have any magic tools on him, he ordered another official to lead Ryouma to a waiting room.

“Now then…” [Ryouma]

After having been brought to the waiting room, Ryouma first placed his poison slime and medicine slime above the desk. Before the slimes were the dishes upon which the light meals meant as service for the participants of the tournament were.

“How is it?” [Ryouma]

The poison slime and the medicine slime didn’t react.

“So there’s no poison in the food then, huh. Good, then next is the water.” [Ryouma]

Ryouma is using the poison slime to test for poison and his medicine slime to test for medicine. One of the two slimes will react if there’s any mixed in.

As Ryouma was having the slimes test for poison and medicine, Ryouma checked the room for anything suspicious. Ryouma decided to do this mianly because of three reasons. First, because of the reveal of the big slime yesterday. Two, because he reached the semifinals. And three, because Matthew was participating.

Ryouma was also keeping a watchful eye on the officials. After he and the slimes finished their respective searches, Ryouma was finally able to heave a sigh of relief. There were no poisons or anything out of the ordinary.

“So the schedule for today… first is the semifinals, after which is rest and if needed treatment for the beasts. Then there’s the exhibition match until the afternoon where the participants and their magical beasts fight against other magical beasts… And, ah! Right, there’s also the deciding match for the third place. Then after all of that is the finals.” [Ryouma]

Ryouma checked the movements of his king sticky slimes as he waited for match time. When the official called him, he left the waiting room, and went toward the stage.

<<The long awaited match is finally here. This stage's very first magic beast tournament has already reached the semifinals! After fighting beast after beast to come out on top, four names have come before us. Two out of those four are here with us at this very moment. And only one of them will receive the right to battle for the tournament's peak!>.

The host hyped up the crowd.

<<Leading five ogres, each and every one of them equipped with excellent weapon and armor, and a strict fighting style like that of the army! This great man who secured victory after victory is none other than Participant Roodman!!>>
"Waa!!!" [Crowd]

The crowd cheered as a man bulging with muscles like a bodybuilder walked up the arena, leading several ogres.

<<On the other corner, the dark horse of the tournament, who used slimes to secure match after match even showing us a complete and utter domination of a match in the third round of the main tournament, overturning everyone's expectations, I present to you, the 14-year old participant, Ryouma Takebayashi!!!>>>
"Uoo!!!" [Crowd]

Just like the cheers for Roodman, the stage shook at the sound of Ryouma's name. Ryouma walked up to the stage, leading five king sticky slimes, and a poison slime and medicine slime on each of his shoulder.

Up the stage, the two participants quietly faced each other. They sent their magical beasts forward at almost the same time.

<<Participant Roodman's five ogres that he hasn't changed once seem to be oozing with power.>>
<<Ogres are human-shaped, so they'reable to equip weapons and armor. It's undoubtedly a strong advantage.>>

At the analyst's words, most of the spectators looked at the ogres.

<<Great sword, hammer, tower shield… All of their equipment would be heavy if they were human, but with the strong arms of the ogres, they could carry these like one-handed swords or small shields. Of course, the attacking power is a given. And although they aren't outfitted with full body armors – most likely to keep their movement and vision unhindered – they have more than enough defense. Coupled with Participant Roodman's leadership, it's no wonder they've managed to win all this time.>>

Moreover, the tower shield the ogres have equipped are magic tools. They can defend against magic so long as there's magic power remaining in the embedded magic jewel. It's because of these shields that Ryouma didn't bring any of his magic slimes. With these shields around, any slime not suited for a melee would be nothing but a sitting duck.

<<As for Participant Takebayashi, he is using slimes as usual, but… he seems to be changing the variety every battle. The weapon as well. In the second match, he used spears. In the third match, they were barehanded. And this time around, they seem to be using staves.>>
<<Staves for slimes, with just this I can't see how he could possibly win. But it's Participant Takebayashi and his slimes after all, so he'll definitely give us a surprise.>>
<From the numbers alone, they're equal, but as for exactly what kind of match we will see today… Sit tight and watch!>>

After confirming that the two participants were ready――

<<Semifinals, start!>>

At those words, the ogres that were lined up raised their shields and advanced forward. The ogres only have a little space in between them as room for their attacks. They skillfully kept their distance to cover each other, not even a single one of them going out of line.

Facing them, Ryouma's king sticky slimes were lined up like the character 'V'.

<<Participant Takebayashi's slimes are on the alert, but Participant Roodman's ogres are steadily closing the distance.>>

The ogres moved slowly, but steadily. They gradually closed in on the slimes. There were no fierce movements; the arena was quiet as the audience watched over the two sides. And then the ogre passed the center of the arena; the two sides now a step away from each other's range.

(Now!)

The moment an ogre took that step, Ryouma ordered his slimes to surround the ogres. Just as the ogre was about to attack the slimes, the slimes suddenly moved. The ogre chased after them with its eyes, but…

<<The moment the ogre lost its focus due to the slimes trying to surround them, the remaining slimes attacked! But the remaining ogres blocked the slime's attempt!>>

There is a gap between the mobility of the ogres and the slimes. Because of that, Ryouma is having his slimes fight by luring the opponent and attacking the moment the opponent is about to attack. It was a battle plan that had a king sticky slime attack an ogre showing its flank or an ogre covering for one of its own.

When the weapons were drawn, the arena underwent a heaven-revolving change, the spectators' cheers resounded throughout the arena.

<<Dodge! Dodge! Dodge! The five slimes are dodging the fierce attacks of the ogre while attacking at every opening! But unfortunately, the slimes just don't have enough power!>>

At the left edge ogres' line, the ogre struck with its hammer against the slime, but the slime twisted its body clockwise, dodging the hammer strike by a hair's breadth, causing the ogre's hammer to land on its own defenseless knees. Although the ogre grimaced, it didn't break posture.

（The slime made the ogre aim for its knees because it was defenseless, but as expected, just once isn't enough to deal a winning blow. There's no other way but to fight an upfront battle. Fortunately, the slimes have the upper hand in skill, so they're able to fight one on one against the ogres!）

This time an ogre swung the great sword it had in its right hand. It tried to send a slime flying, but at that instant, the slime raised its stick up and dodged

the sword. Its body turned into a shape similar to that of a horse's hooves as it stretched out a tentacle from its left side and grabbed the sword. Then without letting go, it swung its stick down against the ogre.

The ogre pulled its body, trying to dodge the attack, but the king sticky slime spit sticky slime on it, so it had no choice but to bring its shield up.

<<What was that just now!? Something just came out of the slime!>>
<<That was probably the slime's sticky liquid. Slimes can generate poison, acid, or some other substance depending on the variety. It's nothing special. But with this we finally have a slime acting like a slime. A slime that coats weapons in toxicants… No, to begin with, the fact that they're using weapons is already plenty strange…>>

As the analyst started to digress, the match continued.

(It's been equal so far, now what… Mn?)

Suddenly, the ogres' movements changed. The ogres that have been maintaining their distance until now, gradually spread. It's slight, but the gap from in front has widened. They're slowly splitting up.

(It doesn't seem like they're doing it unconsciously… so they must have a plan of some sort. It might be best if I assume they're trying to lure us in.)

During training, Ryouma would instruct his slimes on what formation to use and the timing to go with it, but after that, he would just let them train by themselves. Because of this, they've grown such that Ryouma doesn't have to order them on every single detail. Because of that Ryouma was able to keep a watchful eye on the enemy, allowing him to immediately notice the slight change in their movements.

Ryouma focused his mind, and informed the slimes that the opening the ogres were showing was dangerous. Although he couldn't predict what they were planning, with this, the slimes could at least exercise caution.

But a few seconds later. At the center of the five slimes, the king sticky slime that was fighting closest to that gap was forced to dodge toward that dangerous spot.

At that instant, the ogre to the left of the slime bashed its tower shield against

its nucleus. At the same time, the ogre to the right also bashed its shield against the slime. The two ogres are trying to crush the slime's nucleus!

(Dodge it!!)

——As soon as Ryouma ordered that, the body of the slime scattered. The sound of water scattering and the sound of two metal shields clanging, shortly followed by a staff falling to the ground, resounded.

Chapter 25: Semifinals (Conclusion)

<<What's this!? Participant Takebayashi's slime was crushed by the two ogres' shields! Is it alright!?>>

Just as the host said, the two ogres crushed the king sticky slime, but…

(Safe!! The king sticky slime was able to get away safely…)

The slime was narrowly able to escape death. Its body was crushed, but its nucleus was able to dodge through the gaps of the two shields.

Slimes were originally weak creatures. Because of this their ability to sense danger came to become greater than that of humans or other magical beasts. Unfortunately, normal slimes were so weak that despite their ability to sense coming, they still failed to run away as they were just too slow. But Ryouma's slimes were an exception, and they were much faster than wild slimes.

Ryouma's king sticky slimes were not strong, but they were extremely proficient at dodging and defending. With their exceptional ability to sense danger coupled with their heightened mobility, these king sticky slimes are able to escape even from the most perilous of situations.

But that's not all. Just as the saying, 'Chance appears in the peak of danger' goes, the situation took an earth-shattering change as the match turned favorable for Ryouma.

"…? …!? Let go!" [Roodman]

<<Something seems to be off. Participant Roodman is actually giving orders out loud!>>

Just like Ryouma, Roodman usually only gave orders through telepathy, so usually, no one else hears him give commands. The number of times Roodman has ordered out loud could be counted by hand.

Seeing Roodman order out loud, the host couldn't help but become curious. But just as Roodman's ogres tried to release the slimes…

"Gu!?" [Ogre]
"Uga!!" [Ogre]

<<W-What's going on!? The two ogres aren't following orders? No, that's not it! They can't let go!>>

The two ogre slimes that tried to crush the king sticky slimes in between their shields had their shields covered by the king sticky slime's body. Because of that, even their hands were bathed in the king sticky slime's bodily liquids. Suddenly, the two ogres realized they could no longer let go of the shield. They tried to pull, but no matter how hard they tried, the shield wouldn't budge away! In their attempts, the painful sensation of skin being torn off jolted through their bodies.

<<It's probably because of the sticky slime's sticky liquid's stickiness. Once a sticky slime evolves into a big slime, the effect of its sticky liquid will also increase. I don't know why its this effective though.>>

Ryouma's slime wasn't a big slime, but a king slime. Of course its sticky liquid would be even stickier. That's precisely why the situation became like this. For these two ogres to be completely unable to tug away the shields, if the sticky slime weren't a king slime, such a thing couldn't be possible.

(That's enough! Come back!)

At Ryouma's order, the sticky slime that was clinging to the ogres, took advantage of the commotion, and picked up the staff on the ground.

<<What's this!? Participant Ryouma's slime that everyone thought was crushed has come back to life!?>>

(The nucleus jut out under the two shields and was hidden by the ogres' body, so it was difficult for the crowd to see. The opponent figured it out much quicker than I expected though. As expected of a semifinalist. But with this, although the two ogres won't go down just yet, we've at least greatly reduced their fighting strength.)

As soon as the slime picked up the staff, it resolutely attacked the two ogres. The ogres tried to resist, but the slime was the only one attacking. But that was a

given. After all, one of their hands was completely sealed. With their movements sealed like that, they were in no condition to fight. Moreover, when the king sticky slime picked up its staff, it also stretched for the gap between the two shields, and forcefully pulled away their weapon. So on top of being stuck, they were also emptyhanded.

Suddenly, Roodman's voice echoed.

"Those two ogres are retiring!!" [Roodman]

Ryouma stopped his slime's attack on the two ogres, and then he ordered it to meet up with the rest of the slimes still fighting.

<<Participant Roodman has retired two of his slave demons from the battle!>>
<<They've also been covering for the other ogres, so with this, this battle might just turn into a defensive match.>>

Was the analyst truly able to discern Roodman's plans? The unrelenting flurry of Roodman's ogres said otherwise.

(…It's hard to read their movement. We should prioritize evading their attacks. Endure.)

Although Ryouma ordered that, it's not as if the ogres became faster or stronger. They've just changed from moving like trained soldiers, to randomly picking whatever they can lay their hands on, and attacking the slimes. But that's precisely why ogres are "beasts". There was no strategy this; this was a mindless and unadulterated battle of strength.

<<Participant Roodman's ogres are really going at it.>>
<<Their numbers have gone down after all. They're not bothering to defend anymore.With them resolved to go on an all-out attack, Participant Roodman has taken the lead.>>
<<The ogres attack, while the slimes defend. The two sides are locked in a stalemate… Looks like this'll be a long match.>>

Although the attacks of the ogres also hit from time to time, the slimes were able to protect their staves and nucleus. The king sticky slimes were able to dodge the ferocious attacks of the ogres with the evasiveness and defense they take so much pride in.

5 minutes passed with that deadlock continuing.

<<The match isn't moving, huh.>>
<<It's only a little, but the slimes are attacking.>>

After continuing to persist, the ogres' fierce attacks finally exhausted them, and a small opening was made. The slimes aimed for that opening, and gradually, they were able to hit back.

10 more minutes passed——

<<The ogres are slowing down! Are they exhausted?>>

The ogres' breath was ragged. They also handled their weapons relatively poorly now compared to when the match just started.

<<No matter how strong ogres are, if they keep up that sort of rush for 15 minutes, it's only a given that they'd tire out. Roodman must have wanted to avoid a drawn out battle in fear of the possible openings, so he tried to go for a quick win. But that rush backfired instead.>>

Rushes like that can't last long. Short battles and long battles have their own respective fighting styles. If ogres could go at full power for 15 minutes without getting tired, then they would already be B Ranked magical beasts.

<<Compared to the ogres, the slimes don't look one bit tired. Their attacks are getting fiercer! At this rate who knows who'll win!>>

In a battle of endurance, slimes have the advantage. With the ogres slower, the staves of the slimes were of course able to land. The attack behind each one might not be much, but after receiving blow after blow in one part, even the ogres' body won't be able to help, but swell. Especially the lower body and the fingers of the hands holding their equipment as they're relatively easier to aim because of their movements and the close-up battle. This is another reason why the ogres' movements have gotten worse. From here on, the ones on the offensive are the slimes.

<<The flow of the match has changed! The three ogres have stopped moving! The slimes are attacking them with two pairs picking on two of the ogres and another soloing one! They are fighting against this enemy with a body visibly stronger than theirs, without taking even a single step back!>>

Ryouma spurred the slimes on as the ogres had no choice but to defend. They tried to fight back, but they couldn't catch the slimes who just hit back with their own staves.

"Gaa!" [Ogre]

In the midst of the slimes' relentless attack, one of the ogres bellowed out a howl as it swung its great sword diagonally down to the right. The slime dodged that sword's point, entered right to the ogre's feet, and swung its own staff opposite the direction of the great sword, swinging it diagonally down to the left, accurately landing on the ogre's right wrist.

At impact, the staff bent, and the slime rebounded the staff up right, crashing it into the ogre's chin, and sending the ogre's head back. But the slime did not stop its rush just yet.

After hitting the ogre's chin, the slime lifted the opposite side of the staff, and thrusted it diagonally up. Because of the difference in stature and the angle, the staff sunk into the armor by the waist, piercing right at the ogre's groin.

"GUAAA!!!?" [Ogre]

The ogre who just had his chin hit, suddenly screamed and squatted right there and there. The males of the crowd that had been watching from start to finish, all grimaced and held their crotch as they empathized

But even then, the slime did not relent. The slime that had just cruelly struck at the ogre's crotch, went for the finishing blow. Aiming for the back of the head of the squatting ogre, the slime vigorously attacked as it landed a jumping strike. The ogre no longer had the strength, but it still weakly flailed its now empty hands.

<<A-After a magnificent four-hit combo, an ogre has fallen!>>
<<Hitting the weakness of a human-shaped magical beast… How terrifying.>>
(Sorry to the ogre, but the slimes are just too weak, there's no other choice but to go for the fatal spots!)

After a few seconds pause, one of the two pairs of slimes fighting against an ogre, made their move. The ogre moved toward one of the two slimes coming at it; it swung its hammer on its right. But the moment it tried to——

“GUWA!?” [Ogre]

The ogre’s elbow was pierced by one of the slime’s staff. The ogre screamed and the hammer fell behind the ogre.

<<What’s this? The ogre seems to have dropped its weapon… The ogre is trying to pick it up, but its arms don’t seem to be working right as it can’t properly hold the hammer! It just keeps dropping it!>>

What the slime’s staff hit was none other than the upper condyle of the humerus in the elbow. When this location is hit, the nerves will be pressured, and paralysis will occur. Because of that, the ogre couldn’t properly hold the weapon it dropped.

This is a bit off topic, but because the sticky slime was weak and couldn’t properly fight against magical beasts with strong bodies, Ryouma focused on training them to fight against humans. Because of this, the sticky slimes are the best choice against human-shaped magical beast. This is the main reason why Ryouma chose to roll with them against the ogres.

Going back to the main topic.

As for the remaining two ogres, while one was weaponless, the other was already full of scars. Its knees were shaking; its movements were dull. But even then, it didn’t lose its resolve. It kept swinging its great sword. The moment it took a stance with its sword on the side, aiming for the two slime’s staves, the slimes made their move. The two slimes pierced their staff into the ground, and jumped like a pole vault athlete would. In that moment, the ogre swept with its great sword. The staves are going to be cut! Is what anyone would think upon seeing that sight, but…

The staves weren’t cut.

<<They jumped!?>>

At the staves peak, the slimes jumped, their tentacles stretched, and they retrieved their staves as they fluttered about in midair. Seeing that, the crowd was left speechless.

Of course, the enemy ogre couldn’t have possibly predicted that. The ogre stared dumfounded at the two slimes. As the two slimes fell, they used all of

their strength along with all of their weight to land a full-powered blow against the ogre's head. Like a marionette whose strings had been cut, the ogre fell to the ground.

<<Against all odds! The one who fell was none other than the ogre!! Now, only one remains!>>

At the slime's gaudy victory and the host's hyping, commentators and spectators alike grew endlessly excited. The five slimes all gathered around the only remaining orc: the orc that lost its weapon! The paralysis of its arm gone, the ogre properly picked back up its hammer. But at this moment, Roodman raised his hands and loudly said.

"We lost!" [Roodman]

The host immediately accepted Roodman's resignation as he announced Ryouma the winner. At the end of the match, the crowd applauded both Roodman and Ryouma.

"Thank you, it was a good mach." [Roodman]
"Same here. Thank you very much." [Ryouma]

After Roodman spoke a few words to Ryouma, he quietly left the stage. As Ryouma watched Roodman's back, Ryouma wordlessly returned… But 10 minutes later, the tournament staff asked Ryouma if he could remove the sticky liquid on the weapons and shields, so Ryouma ended up meeting Roodman a second time.

Chapter 26: Finals (Opening)

The match ended and the exhibition match was in full throttle. After Ryouma finished removing the sticky slimes from Roodman's ogres, he quickly went back to his waiting room, and ate as he thought to himself.

(I thought it might be possible when I met him this morning… No, actually, I've thought of it ever since I won the preliminaries ¬– that as long as I keep winning I might end up meeting Matthew along the way, but… who would've thought I'd actually have to fight him in the finals. To be honest, I didn't think he would be able to remain in the tournament for this long. He put on a lot of airs in the past, but he didn't really give off a strong image… But then again, there're also people who're weak, but have strong magical beasts. And it's a fact that Matthew got through all of his matches so far, so I might've been underestimating him…)

"Right! In the next match, I'll have the slime I can show in public fight as hard as possible. The slime also has good compatibility with the opponent, so there should be no problem!" [Ryouma]

Around the time Ryouma resolved himself, the man at which that spear was aimed at was currently…

"Just one more win, just one more win and I'll be able to recover." [Matthew]

He was assigned a waiting room just as Ryouma was. After eating his meal, he quietly mumbled to himself, caressing his left shoulder with his right hand repeatedly as he sat on a chair. The image of him mumbling and caressing like that resembled nothing like a tamer guild branch's guildmaster. Of course, he was actually only the big man in name and wasn't actually the one in charge, but let's just put that aside.

Besides, being on paper meant that he wasn't actually that far off from the top seat. But what Ryouma doesn't know is that Matthew had actually already received a notice of dismissal. One week later, Matthew would officially lose his

position.

Matthew entered this tournament to gain fame and wealth. If he could attain the prestige of the magic beast tournament's champion, his personal worth would increase. If so, then with enough luck, he might just be able to keep his status; it was the desperate hope of a man in dire straits. As for the alternative of turning over to a new leaf and starting anew, he did not think of it. In fact, he probably doesn't even have anything else on mind except for chasing after his status.

Meanwhile, the finals were drawing ever closer.

The exhibition match and the deciding match of the third place left the spectators lifeless as they eagerly waited for the finals. Amongst the eager crowd, within the noble seats, was one of the groups cheering Ryouma: It was Elia and the others.

"It's finally the final match!" [Kanan]
"It sure feels strange watching someone you know make it to the finals." [Michelle]
"I didn't do anything, yet I still feel so proud." [Riera]
"But still… Who would've thought that Ryouma-han would actually make it to the finals with just his slimes? How frightening." [Miyabi]
"It's just as usual though." [Elia]
"It is exactly as the Ojousama said, Ryouma-sama is always exceeding our expectations." [Sebasu]

Sebasu-san who has visited Ryouma several times since parting three years ago and has personally seen his research and experiments that were either based on his previous life's memories or things he'd thought up, heartily talked about Ryouma. The five girls wryly smiled when they heard Sebasu talk like that, but then suddenly, the trumpets sounded, and everyone's attention were gathered onto the stage.

The resound of trumpets indicated the beginning of the finals. The extravagant, heroic performance lasted for a short 30 minutes. After which, the announcer spoke.

<<For our final match in this tournament, the first man to enter is none other

than the very guild master of this town's tamer guild branch, Matthew Ganteyn!!>>

At the announcer's call, Matthew entered the arena with his magical beast from the entrance below Elia and the other's seat.

He had 12 beasts all in all. 11 of which resembled the raptors inhabiting the Great Forest of Shurus. From a glance it didn't look much different from a small carnivorous dinosaur, but its whole body was bigger than a raptor. Its jaws and legs were more developed and in between its claws were membranes, drawing its limbs, webbed. As for the last remaining beast, it was a giant over two-meters tall, possessing a rocklike carapace and shears, it was a giant crab.

When Ryouma saw Matthew going up the stage, he thought to himself, "Did he always have a name like that? Then again, I think he might have said something like that when we were registering…" Ryouma was more interested in Matthew's family name than his magical beasts.

<<Participant Matthew's magical beasts include 11 river raptors and 1 river crab. Can we get a quick explanation of these magical beasts?>>
<<Yes, of course. The River Raptor is a C Rank magical beast. It looks similar to the D Ranked, Raptor, but it has an air sac by its neck and webbed limbs. It's a magical beast that can move even in water. It generally lives around large rivers. The river crab similarly also lives near large rivers, but in exchange for its lack of mobility, it possesses a hard carapace and a pair of strong claws. River Crabs that've lived for a long time can also use water magic.>>
<<Since it can use magic it must also be B Rank then.>>

After Matthew's entrance ended, it was Ryouma's turn to enter, but suddenly… The audience stiffened.

<<Oh?>>

What entered was not Ryouma, but a lone slime. Only, that slime was so big it filled the entrance, and it seemed like it had to forcefully push itself out just to get out. But what's more is that not all of its body was out just yet. Of course, the spectators knew that that slime was Ryouma's magical beast, but no one knew what kind of slime could possibly be so big that it would fill the entire entrance. No one, except for Ryouma's friend, Sebasu.

“So he’s bringing out that slime.” [Sebasu]
“It’s big… Very big…” [Elia]
“That’s the emperor scavenger slime.” [Sebasu]
“Isn’t that too big?” [Kanan]

The emperor scavenger slime is the combination of 10,000 slimes; its special trait is its overwhelming size. It’s a league bigger than the king variation, and even its nucleus has a diameter of 60 centimeters. Ryouma tried a lot of things, but despite all his effort, he couldn’t get the emperor scavenger slime smaller than a ball with a radius of 3m.

Moreover, today was a time to battle, so rather than make the slime small, Ryouma made it a little bigger. And because of that, it ended up filling the entrance. After the slime was finally able to get through, Ryouma appeared.

<<Participant Takebayashi has entered the stage! If you don’t think you can see him, look above the giant slime! That man riding is none other than Participant Takebayashi!!>>

Ryouma had ordered the slime to take care not to crush the official that signaled for him to enter, so Ryouma only went up after confirming the official’s safety. As for why he’s riding the slime, there’s not much reason behind it. He just thought it’d look good, so that’s what he did.

After entering, Ryouma ordered his slime, and the slime immediately depressed the part Ryouma was sitting on, throwing Ryouma high up through its elasticity. It was as if Ryouma had jumped on a trampoline. All eyes gathered on Ryouma. Some imagined Ryouma falling, giving rise to voices of shock and surprise, but–

“‘Telekinesis’” [Ryouma]

As Ryouma was falling, he casted ‘Telekinesis’ on himself to soften the fall, and he landed safely without even a sound.

<<What a gaudy entrance!>>
<<A spectacular landing that took advantage of the neutral magic ‘Telekinesis’. This seems to be the same technique taught by the dragon guild to its members to ensure safe descent when falling while in midflight. But putting that aside, what’s really worthy of attention is that giant slime. According to information

we've just received, this slime is apparently known as the Emperor Scavenger Slime; a new variation.>>
<<A new variation! Another unusual sight! What kind of slime is it?>>
<<Unfortunately, I'm not privy to the details. After all, it is a new variation… However, as a magical beast its rank should be anywhere from C to B.>>

A normal slime is G Rank, a big slime is F, and a huge slime is E. Each size change increases their rank, so a king slime is D. Naturally, the 10,000 slime, emperor slime, despite not having been discovered before yet, would be a C Rank. If the slime is a higher type, then it would go up by another rank. No matter how favorable one ranks the slime, it would still stay within the B Rank, so it won't go past the tournament limits.

<<So that's how it is. Still, Participant Ryouma sure has brought out another interesting one, huh. I wonder just how exactly he is able to acquire all these.>>
<<As far as I know, he is the only one who's been able to gather these many slimes. For him to go this far, I wonder just what exactly his purpose is. According to talks around town, Participant Takebayashi apparently has a cannonball rhino; a powerful B Ranked magical beast. Yet he has won all this time without relying on that cannonball rhino once.>>

The two commentators were filled with a mix of admiration and astonishment while Ryouma felt a bit shy as he quietly caressed his emperor scavenger slime's big body.

This is off topic, but before Ryouma got 10,000 scavengers, he actually wondered whether to call the next slime after king, god. But because of the strong faith of the people of this world, a problem might occur if he were to do so, so the gods stopped Ryouma. Naturally, after finding out the possible repercussions, Ryouma thanked the gods.

Going back to the topic.

Ryouma and Matthew sent their respective slave demons forward. Matthew positioned his river crab right in front of him, beside which, he then positioned the 11 river raptors. After he finished positioning them, he looked up, and glared at Ryouma's emperor scavenger slime as well as Ryouma who was hidden behind and had his eyes closed

The reason Ryouma's eyes were closed was because the emperor scavenger slime was too big. Ryouma couldn't see in front of him, so he decided to abandon his sight and just rely on his Magic Perception to ascertain the enemy's position.

<<The two participants are ready. It feels like it's been so long, but not much time has actually passed. Now, for the final match of this tournament… to whom will the goddess of victory smile? Final Match, start!!!>>

Immediately, the group of river raptors split into two groups of six and five as they surrounded the emperor scavenger slime. The river raptors ran in two circles, one inner that ran clockwise and another outer than ran counterclockwise. The river raptors ran like that without stopping once.

<<Looks like they're already using it. This is the method a group of river raptors would use when hunting a single large prey. They surround their prey, confuse their eyes, and then attack from behind. River Raptors possess explosive leg strength which come from their activities underwater. When this method is coupled with that leg strength of theirs, even adventurers have no choice but to be beaten to death.>>
<<Frightening! What frightening power! But… doesn't it seem like the river raptors are at a loss?>>

The river raptors are running around the slime, but they're not attacking. As for Ryouma and the slime, they're just waiting for the opponent to make a move. The scavengers' fighting style focuses on the use throwing techniques, so it's easier for it to fight when the aggressor is the enemy.

<<Aren't the river raptors just being cautious? It might only be a slime, but it's managed to get to the finals, so it must be strong. Moreover, the slime is also bigger, and it's also a new variation, so there're currently no information available regarding it. It wouldn't be strange at all for Participant Matthew to send out an order like that.>>
<<So that's how it is. And here I thought the river raptors were at a loss at what to do.>>

At the host's joking words, laughter filled the arena. While commentator and spectators alike were laughing, the battle between the river raptors and the

slime continued.

Chapter 27: Finals (Middle)

A minute passed since the slime was surrounded. Just as people were starting to wonder when the fighting would start, Matthew's river crab casted a Water Ball. At the same time, the two river raptors that were right in between Ryouma and his slime, lifted their forelegs and thrusted with their claws.

The emperor scavenger slime did not dodge the Water Ball. It used its body and received the attack head on, causing it to move back a bit. Then it stretched out its tentacles and grabbed at the limbs of the incoming river raptors.

The moment the river raptors were about to thrust their claws, the part of the tentacles that would touch the claws depressed, and the tentacles grabbed at the claws and the heads of the river raptors. The river raptors were made to slide to the tentacles, upon which the volume of the tentacles suddenly increased. When it did, the tentacles swelled, and coupled with their elasticity, the tentacles lifted up the river raptors. The whole thing looked as if the slime went under the river raptors.

With the slimes nimble movements, the two river raptors had their limbs caught before they could dodge, and immediately after, they were thrown high up above the slime's giant body.

<<The preemptive attack from the river crab's magic was not effective! Moreover, the two raptors have been thrown! T-This is——>>

What comes up must come down, that's an unchangeable truth. As the river raptors fell, the slime pulled the legs of the two falling river raptors, and it threw them against the river raptors running around it.

"Ge!?" [River Raptor 1]
"Gya Gya!?" [River Raptor 2]
"!!?" [River Raptor 3]
"!!?" [River Raptor 4]

<<It threw them!? The raptors where the other raptors were thrown to managed to run away, but the river raptors that were thrown crashed into the

ground!>>
<<Fortunately, they were able to immediately stand back up, but there's no doubt they took some damage. The river raptors are plenty durable, so they won't retire just yet. But that's definitely not an attack they can take a second time.>>

As the crowd grew loud, Matthew's face turned ugly. Immediately, Matthew ordered the river raptors, and five of them came jumping while the other six thrusted at the slime.

(Did you think that if you increase the number we won't be able to defend?)

Just as the slime did a while ago, it grabbed one of the river raptors by the leg.

Now, if the surface of the slime that was facing Matthew was the front, and the surface of the slime facing Ryouma was the back, then it could be said that it was from the front that that river raptor attacked. At the same time, three other raptors jumped from the back.

Just like the slime did before, it threw the river raptor coming in from in front. And because at that moment the other river raptors were jumping, they weren't able to escape like they did a while ago. The river raptor that was thrown fiercely crashed into one of the river raptors that jumped, and then fell to the ground. No matter how agile river raptors were on land, they couldn't change their direction while in midair.

But the river raptors' attack wasn't about to end with just this.

<<The river raptors all attacked at the same time! But their attack had no effect! In fact, one of the river raptors was thrown, and it fell to the ground!>>

The slime tripped the river raptors coming in to thrust at it with their claws, while it positioned its tentacles to where the jumping river raptors would land. After the river raptors that jumped landed, the slime scooped them up and threw them. But this was different from when the slime threw the raptors from a high place. With this method, the damage was much lower, and the river raptors were able to immediately pick themselves back up and attack.

But the river raptors were still being led around by the slime, and that very scene was reflected on the eyes of all spectators. That pissed Matthew off.

As Matthew's face went red, he ordered his slave demons to stop attacking and distance themselves. The river crab that was waiting at the back summoned up a huge amount of water enough to be thought of, a river. It manipulated that large volume of water in the air.

(What is that magic? It doesn't have the same vigor as the advanced magic 'Water Fall'. There's a lot of water, but it only seems like it's generating lots of water and manipulating it… It doesn't really look like it's about to attack. The flow of magic power is also too quiet for an attack. Is this the special water magic of a river crab? Magical beasts sometimes have strange ways of using magic that have strange effects compared to people, so I can't look down on it, but… Mn? Ah! I get it!)

As Ryouma inferred what the river crab's aim was from its movement, the river crab covered the giant body of the slime with the water it summoned, creating a room about 2m thick. After which, the river raptors started jumping in.

<<What is that?>>
<<The river crab created a room made out of water to allow the river raptors to be able to fight at their peak. River crabs can drown their preys with their water magic. They specialize at controlling large volumes of water.>>

For humans and magical beasts that need to breathe, not being able to escape that would prove to be fatal. Fortunately, slimes didn't need to worry about suffocating though their movement would still be hindered. Compared to that, the river raptor was now in their home court. Aside from having barely any differences in speed when on land here, the river raptors would also be able to attack in ways that they couldn't on land.

As Mathew continued to give orders, the river raptors swam as they pleased within the water room as they aimed for the slime's nucleus. Water splashed out as the river raptors and the slime inside moved, flooding the surrounding area. Ryouma in particular was given quite a shower, and he looked like someone who had been running in the rain.

But Ryouma wasn't concerned with that; he kept his focus at the match on hand.

(As expected, the slime is moving slower underwater. It doesn't look like they'll

let us get out either. And even if we could, I'd rather do something about that crab first. The slime won't suffocate and they won't be able to reach the nucleus, so…)

What the river raptors had were not gills, but air sacs. So Ryouma wondered, wouldn't they drown if those run out of air? As Ryouma ordered the slime, the slime tried to catch the river raptors, but they managed to barely slip away every time.

(…Let's go with brute force then.)

As Ryouma gave out the next order, the emperor scavenger slime's giant body suddenly shook. In the next moment, all the tentacles returned to the slime's body, and the slime stopped attacking. The water room gradually thinned, but as the river crab added more water, the room grew thick again. However, if the river crab were to stop adding water, the volume would once again decrease.

<<It would appear that the slime is drinking the water.>>

Just as the analyst said, the emperor scavenger slime was allowing the water to pass through its defenses to allow it to drink up the surrounding water and get rid of the water room. But the speed of the emperor scavenger slime drinking and the river crab adding water looked to be equal. The emperor scavenger slime continued to drink like that while protecting its nucleus for some time.

Five minutes later.

The water the river crab was generating finally slowed, and the water room was growing thinner and thinner. Matthew ordered the river crab to release more water. But no matter how much he ordered the river crab, the volume of water added couldn't increase.

<<I wonder why?>>
<<It's most likely running out of magic power. Even magical beasts can't use magic without magic power.>>

Ten seconds later, the analyst's conjecture was proven right, and the river crab had no choice but to stop generating water. The water membrane still covered the slime, but there were already holes in it, causing the water to overflow to the ground. The river crab has clearly reached its limit. Seeing that, Matthew spat

out loud as he raised his hands.

"Damn it! So annoying!"
<<Participant Matthew has raised his hand! That's the sign for bringing in another magical beast! Can this new contender change the flow of the match!? >>
(It's the finals, so I thought he'd laid down all his cards already… Does he still have a card to play? I wonder what's going to come… I don't have any info about this at all.)

Matthew raised his right arm up to his shoulder and chanted. Matthew was a conjurer, so he used conjuration to summon his beasts. After a flash of light, a giant appeared. Though tt resembled a human in shape, it was obviously not a human.

(Huge! It's even bigger than the emperor scavenger slime!?)
<<C-Could this be…>>

When the giant appeared on stage, everyone including Ryouma was shocked. But that wasn't surprising. After all, a giant just appeared. It stood almost 5m tall. Its limbs were thick like the pillars of a building. On its right hand was a handle that was almost like a tree. It was a bundle of rocks fastened by the vines wrapped around it; it was bigger than even an adult's height.

At the end of the bundle of rocks was an axe on one side and something that looked like a pickaxe on the other side. The weapon looked crudely made, too crude for a human to have made it. Perhaps that giant might have enough knowledge to make a weapon out of stone, but those four blood-lusted eyes of it said otherwise; for not even a sliver of reason could be seen in them.

<<It's huge! Analyst, please.>>
<<A-Ahh…>>

The host and the spectators were all focused on the magical beast, but as the analyst was about to explain, the color of his face and his voice went stiff.

<<This magical beast is known as the Portrait Giant, a humanoid-type magical beast. It's not a magical beast that lives in the country, so I'm not familiar with the detail… But the tamer guild does have people that specialize in trading magical beasts, so for their guildmaster to have a beast like this is not so strange,

but…>>
<<Is there something the matter?>>
<<No. It’s just that bringing out this beast was a risky call.>>

The portrait giant is a B Rank magical beast when young and anywhere from A to S when fully grown. It’s a magical beast that grows in rank as it grows older. And the way to discern its rank is from its height.

<<Participant Matthew’s portrait giant is still a child, so it’s only a B Rank… but it shouldn’t take much longer for it to be classified as an A Rank.>>
<<So that’s what you meant by risky. An A Rank is illegal after all.>>
<<Yes, but it’s definitely strong. An older portrait giant could even go over castle walls and trample people and buildings underfoot. It’s a fearsome magical beast that’s strong enough to destroy a town by itself. It’s often said that it’s the strongest amongst the humanoid-type magical beasts.>>
<<To think Participant Matthew has actually managed to acquire a beast like that! As expected of the Gimuru Tamer Guild Branch’s leader!>>

As if agreeing to the words of the host, the whole arena voiced out words of praise toward Matthew. Hearing that, Matthew seemed to regain his cool. For a moment, he even boastfully glanced at Ryouma, but when he moved his gaze toward the portrait giant, his expression went grim.

As the slimes and the river raptor were continuing to battle and the river crab was approaching its limit, the portrait giant moved out.

(It’s fast! Dodge!)

The portrait giant ran. Due to its height, every single one of its steps was wide. It instantly shortened the distance between it and the slime. As it neared, tt swung the axe in its right hand down. The slime managed to dodge, but when the axe landed, it hollowed the ground, whirling up grit and stones.

Moreover, as the portrait giant pulled back the axe on its right, it slammed its left fist against the slime. Although the slime’s body contorted more than any attack yet, it was definitely able to handle that fist. However, the attack that came next was different.

After the portrait giant pulled back its axe, it swung it from the right down to the left. The slime also tried to dodge this, but because of the previous attack, it

couldn’t dodge in time. The axe grazed the surface of the slime’s body, tearing open a slight wound on the slime.

When Ryouma saw that, he unconsciously wrinkled his brows.

(A direct hit’s no good even with the physical attack resistance. He sure brought out a crazy one at the very last moment… But there’s definitely still an opening. I was wondering why he hadn’t brought this one out until now, but it seems he does have a proper reason.)

Ryouma’s eyes were not on his slime. He was looking at the river raptors and Matthew as he thought to himself. The portrait giant was attacking proactively, but because it wasn’t paying attention to its surrounding, there were many cases where the river raptors would get caught up in its attack.

The ones who were actually fighting were only the slime and the portrait giant. Even when the river raptors tried to join the fight they couldn’t. Every time, they would just end up distancing themselves, looking for an opening to go in. Meanwhile, Matthew was once again glaring at the portrait giant’s back with a stern look. He tried to order the giant.

“Tch… So I can’t connect with it after all…”

Seeing Matthew’s expression go sour after giving out orders, Ryouma finally confirmed it. Matthew couldn’t control the portrait giant. Although Ryouma wasn’t sure about this, Ryouma hypothesized that Matthew could only give three kinds of orders to the portrait giant.

1. He could order it not to attack him.
2. He could order it who to attack.
3. He could order it to stop attacking and other standby commands.

Because there were a lot of parts that would be left to the portrait giant, he could not let it fight alongside other magical beasts. They also couldn’t see this giant as their ally. Which is why Matthew has not brought out this beast until now. More precisely, he couldn’t bring it out. After all, there was a possibility that his relationship with his slave demons would get crushed underfoot by its appearance.

It could also be said that Matthew bringing out a magical beast that he

couldn’t control, just goes to show how much he’s been driven to a corner. And it was because of that fact that Matthew’s face went grim, and the wrinkles on his brows grew even deeper.

Chapter 28: Finals (Closing)

The sound of the wind being cut as the portrait giant swung its axe and fist showed just how much power was behind them, but the emperor scavenger slime managed to barely dodge its attack, and throw the portrait giant.

“Uk!?”

The slime intentionally received the fist of the portrait giant, letting it penetrate its body as it took its arm. The moment the portrait giant’s center of gravity inclined forward, the slime slid beneath the portrait giant and grabbed its neck. As it enlarged its body, it threw the portrait giant in a manner similar to a judo throw.

As the portrait giant’s colossal body slammed into the stage, a heavy dull sound resounded, and the cheers of the crowd echoed throughout the arena.

The slime tried to choke the portrait giant, but its arms weren’t strong enough. As the portrait giant jumped up, it fixed its posture and glared at the slime.

<<The match has gotten unpredictable! Participant Matthew’s portrait giant has been pressuring with its overwhelming power, but Participant Takebayashi’s slime was able to dodge and throw the portrait giant to create an opening!>>
<<And that’s considering that the slime would be instantly killed if its nucleus were to receive an attack. It really did a good job dodging the portrait giant’s attacks. Although the portrait giant’s been struggling, the slime still managed to throw it several times. Neither side seems to be showing any weakness, but——>>

While the analyst was explaining, Ryouma gave out orders to the slime. After receiving the order, the slime extended out two tentacles.

<<Oh? The slime seems to be extending its body?>>
<<Those tentacles are able to handle weapons and even catch the enemy. I wonder what Participant Ryouma’s slime is planning.>>

As all eyes gathered on the slime’s two tentacles, the tentacles drooped down.

And as the slime twisted its body, the tentacles started swaying. Seeing that, the portrait giant that had been attacking all this time stopped. It carefully watched the slime.

Then in the next instant.

“GUOu…!”

Left, right, left, right. The tentacles that were stretched out on both sides attacked the portrait giant along with the slime.

<<The slime has extended its body, and is using it like a whip!? It’s actually quite powerful. The portrait giant’s expression doesn’t look good!>>
<<Half must be because of the pain. The other half’s probably because of fear.>>

The emperor scavenger slime twisted it body as at it lashed out its tentacles. With the added power of centrifugal force and its weight, its whipping tentacles had enough power behind them to send a human flying. Moreover, with the long reach of the tentacles, the slime’s attack was outside of the portrait giant’s range.

The left tentacle struck against the axe and then as it came back, the right tentacle whipped against the left shoulder of the portrait giant. Continuing, the left tentacle swung about, and then after revolving once, it went for the giant’s face from the right. Although the giant was able to dodge, the tentacle ended up hitting the giant’s right arm. After which, the right tentacle went for the giant’s armpit.

The portrait giant tried to shield itself with its arm and shield as it looked for an opening, but the slime’s attacks seemed to be effective as anger could be seen on the portrait giant’s face.

“OoOOO!!!”

When the giant roared, it covered its face with its left arm and swung its axe against the slime. At the same time, for whatever reason, whether it was because the slime wanted to pressure the giant further or whether it just did so without any particular thought behind it, the slime strongly stepped forward with its right side, and the axe descended on it.

But before it could hit it, the slime dodged to the left, and then it whipped

back against the back of the giant's knees with its left tentacle, causing the giant to fall down to its right knee.

The portrait giant looked like it was about to fall, but it managed to endure. But then the slime whipped with its tentacles again. The right tentacle whipped against the right shoulder, forcing it backward, while the left tentacle wrapped itself around the giant's neck, pulling it down.

As one might expect, the portrait giant wasn't able to endure the slime's attack, and it finally fell to its back. Immediately, the slime went to hold it down.

(Attack with the tentacles from the middle and long, and then throw the enemy when in close combat. Maintain this situation. There's no need for a strong attack. Just fight carefully like this. If you could get the giant to drop its axe, that'd make the fight a whole lot easier. But since the giant seems to be hell-bent on maintaining its grip on its axe even when thrown, then it's fine even if you don't. Don't push yourself. I'll step further back so as not to get in the way.)

Because the portrait giant kept pushing forward, the position Ryouma was standing in was relatively close to the center of the fight. Not to mention the river raptors trying to surround the slime from afar. Because of all this, Ryouma stepped back a little further, back down toward the entrance.

But then something unexpected happened.

"Mu…
"Stop!!"
"GIGIi!"

One of the river raptors surrounding the two magical beasts in a fierce battle from afar ran toward Ryouma and attacked him. Seeing that, Matthew panicked and immediately ordered it stop. When the crowd heard Matthew's words, all eyes focused on Ryouma and the river raptor approaching him. Shrieks of dread and voices telling Ryouma to run away resounded. At the same time, the adventurers that were positioned by the entrance in case of emergency showed themselves.

The river raptor thrusted its claws against Ryouma, but Ryouma was like a willow's leaf as he easily dodged the attack and unsheathed his katana. But

because the river raptor didn't attack again, Ryouma didn't attack.

<<Well, that sure was dangerous~ Participant Takebayashi was able to dodge easily, but I was nervous as all hell.>>
<<Participant Matthew did order it to stop almost immediately, so it didn't continue its attack. I wonder if the river raptor mistook its opponent… Participant Matthew, please be careful. If this happens again, it'll be counted as a red card, and you'll immediately be disqualified.>>

Matthew bowed his head to the announcer and to the surrounding crowd, but he didn't bow to Ryouma, and even stealthily glared at him.

(Was it really an accident? Or was it just made to look like an accident? I don't know, but in any case, I should take some distance. I know he's been warned that there won't be a second time, but still…)

As Ryouma sheathed his katana, he distanced himself from his slime, and ordered it to take its time and fight at the center of the arena.

Although an accident occurred, the crowd remained on fire. The emperor scavenger slime was currently pushing back the portrait giant with technique, but if its nucleus were to be hit, the portrait giant would immediately be declared the winner. With the battle close enough that either side winning wasn't strange, the crowd couldn't help but watch with abated breath.

When the excitement of the crowd reached its peak, the slime's tentacles caught the face of the portrait giant.

Having been hit at the nose, the portrait giant faltered. It held its nose with its left hand as it stepped back. But the slime wasn't about to let that chance go, and it caught the giant's right arm with its tentacles.

Immediately, the giant jumped back, but because the slime didn't resist the giant's attempt, the giant ended up jumping back more than it expected and it jumped back one or two steps back. After the giant landed, the slime rammed its body against it, broke its posture, and then threw it from its back.

"KAFUu GOFUu…"

<<What a spectacular throwing technique! And what a loud crash as the portrait giant fell on its stomach to the ground!>>

<<Its nose was also hit after all.>>

The portrait giant was able to immediately stand back up, but now it was right beside Matthew just like when it was first summoned out. As Matthew glanced at the giant who was catching its breath and not attacking, Matthew instigated the river raptors against the slime and yelled at the river crab.

“What are you doing! You can still fight, right? Then fight!”

Matthew’s voice was neither petitioning nor jeering, if anything, it was desperate. But the portrait giant wouldn’t move. It was his own magical beast, so of course, he knew that the portrait giant couldn’t just attack rashly after being thrown time after time again. But Matthew still ordered it to. He couldn’t help it, after all that was the only thing he could order it to do.

While the portrait giant was at a loss on how to continue, the slime waved its tentacles as if it were shadow boxing, threatening and pressuring the enemy. But as it did that, Ryouma felt something amiss.

(Hmm? …What’s with this magic power? …Moreover, what’s with this anxiousness that’s reminiscent of beginner magicians failing at control?)

Because Ryouma excelled at Magic Perception, he was able to sense that trace of magic power. When he focused his senses to search for its source, he was able to find out that it was leaking from Matthew’s left arm.

As Ryouma was wondering what that was, the trace of magic power suddenly burst and vanish just like a balloon. Ryouma continued to observe Matthew, but as nothing seemed to change, he ordered the slime to continue attacking the portrait giant as always, but then in the next moment——

“Ha——“

——Matthew’s body was blown to the back. The portrait giant had kicked him. Its action was a lot closer to someone kicking a bug by their feet rather than an attack, but with the portrait giant’s thick leg, Matthew spun two times, and when he stopped, he was right by the entrance. Matthew was still alive, but he didn’t look like he was about to wake up anytime soon.

Commentators and spectators alike felt as if a dull sound had reached their ears as they went silent for a moment. Then——

“Gya!!”

“Oi! Is he alright!?”

As the crowd started to panic, the match was put to a halt. The announcer tried to calm the crowd down, saying there are barriers and equipment installed, but the crowd still panicked. The crowd near the portrait giant in particular were especially panicked. People standing up to run away even just a moment sooner could be seen here and there. In the midst of the commotion, the tournament staff and the hired adventurers began to move. At the same time, a great voice loud enough to hurt one’s ears erupted.

“o, ————!!!!!”

That was none other than the cry of a wild magical beast meant to instill fear into those who heard it. The crowd that tried to flee all came to a halt as they looked toward the portrait giant. What happened next caused them all to gulp.

The portrait giant lifted its axe and affixed its eyes on its prey. But its target was not the slime. Instead it was its very own master, Matthew!

Not only did the portrait giant kick its own master, it’s even planning to finish the job. No matter how you look at it, this portrait giant was going wild. The hired adventurers went to save Matthew, but the axe swung down toward him —— Right before it landed, something stopped the giant.

“GUU…!”

The slime hit the back of the portrait giant, causing it to turn toward it.

Although Matthew was an annoying guy, Ryouma didn’t really mind him as long as he didn’t get in his way. Ryouma didn’t hate Matthew to the extent that he would quietly watch him be killed by a magical beast right in front of his eyes. Besides, if this magical beast were to go wild, things would get dangerous. So Ryouma didn’t hesitate to order the slime. At the same time, he also unsheathed his blade.

Because of its battle with the slime so far, all of the portrait giant’s attention was now focused on the slime. As the portrait giant rushed toward the slime, the adventurers saved Matthew, and carried him back to the passage used by participants when entering the stage.

The slime and the portrait giant were fighting at the center of the stage just as they did a while ago, but the river raptors and the river crab were different. A while ago they were just surrounding the slime while watching from afar, but now they're all scrambling to run away, attacking all those in their way.

(There's no reason for them to fight without an order, so they're running away before they get caught up in the mess. This is about expected, I guess… Coming toward here are 11 river raptors, while the river crab's headed for the adventurers… Wait a moment, isn't that Glen-san and Raypin-san? The adventurers over there are pretty much just my acquaintances.)

The reason they're here is because the organizers for the tournament predicted that some high ranking magical beast might come out – especially, in the finals – so they made sure to get some high-quality adventurers. So it isn't strange for someone like Glen, who is an S Rank, or Raypin, who is an A Rank, to come out.

More adventurers came out from the passage behind Ryouma, but this time, they weren't Ryouma's acquaintances. They advised Ryouma to withdraw, but Ryouma couldn't just leave his slime who was fighting with the giant by itself. The portrait giant wasn't about to let the slime leave either.

Ryouma told the hired adventurers that he would take care of himself, so the adventurers left him and went to deal with the river raptors. The river raptors were already heading their way, so they didn't have the time to talk things at their leisure.

After that, the six adventurers attacked the river raptors, and after reducing their numbers, the danger was averted. The river crab also fell after having several of its limbs cut. And with it having run out of magic power, it was right at death's door. With the situation having changed for the better, the adventurers reallocated their forces, and Glen and Raypin along with other adventurers headed for the portrait giant. Seeing that, the panicked crowd finally calmed down, and some even started cheering on the adventurers.

Ryouma ordered his slime to separate from the portrait giant. And although the portrait giant tried to pursue it, the adventurers stopped it. With a group of adventurers that had an S Rank in it as its opponent, the portrait giant's

prospects were grim.

Raypin used his magic to grab the portrait giant's attention, while Glen crushed its knees and feet. After that was a one-sided slaughter. The portrait giant kept its body up with its left hand as it flailed about its axe, but it was only a matter of time now. However, just as everyone was thinking that, the portrait giant's axe broke.

Regardless of whether it broke because of long usage or because it was damaged in the fight, when the portrait giant lifted its axe up, it broke, and the vines keeping the rock axe together was cut, allowing the blade made out of rock to slip.

The crowd was even more relieved when they saw the portrait giant's weapon break.

(Not good!)

But Ryouma who was watching from a distance, lightly panicked, and he immediately bolted off toward the direction of the detached blade. A few breaths later, the other adventurers finally noticed, and Glen's voice resounded.

"Someone do something about the axe!!!"

The blade was still going up. At this rate, the blade would eventually draw a parabola and fall right into the noble seats. Elia and the others were there. There's a barrier to protect against projectiles (physical attack), but there's no guarantee that it'd be able to stop that blade of rock. Having thought of that, Ryouma immediately moved his body.

At the same time, in the noble seats——

"Ojousamas! Let us take shelter now just to be safe!"

Having also thought of their safety, Sebasu persuaded Elia and the rest of the girls to leave.

Ryouma reinforced his legs with ki as he ran toward the emperor scavenger slime. As Ryouma ordered the slime, the slime wrapped itself around Ryouma as it pushed Ryouma up without hindering his momentum, then it threw him.

"'Big, Ice, Wall'!"

Ryouma launched up into the air, forming the shape of an arch different from the axe, as he headed straight for the noble seats. That figure of his being launched was no different from a trebuchet catapulting a rock. Ryouma has practiced this motion with his slimes thousands of times, which is why they are able to pull of this method. As Ryouma tore through the wind, Ryouma focused his mind despite the resistance of the air against his body. He invocated his magic.

'Big Ice Wall'

After combining the two defensive spells, the water magic, Water Wall, and the ice magic, Ice Wall, the result is a wall of ice more durable on one side than the other.

As Ryouma neared the noble seats, he casted the wall of ice with Elia and the others as the center. In this moment, his eyes met with Elia's group, but they didn't have the time to chat.

"'Telekinesis'!!!!"

Using the neutral magic, Telekinesis, Ryouma stopped his momentum, preventing himself from crashing into his own wall of ice as he descended into the ground away from the falling blade. Immediately after, the blade of rock crashed into the wall of ice. Large cracks appeared on the wall, but the blade couldn't penetrate. The noble seats managed to get off safely

'O-!'

The crowd cheered and applauded when they saw that, but then because of the impact, the wall of ice began to collapse.

"Uo!!"

Ryouma wouldn't get off unhurt if he were to get hit by the crumbling fragments of the ice wall, so he immediately tried to run away. But then——

"'Flame Bomb'"

Raypin blew away the fragment with his fire magic. And as Ryouma's slime approached him, it extended its tentacle and stood in front of the collapsing wall, protecting Ryouma.

Ryouma looked toward Raypin and the slime. Then after catching his breath, he bowed to them. At nearly the same time, Glen finished off the portrait giant. After that, the adventurers communicated with the host with some signals, and then…

<<Everyone can now rest assured, the situation is now under control——>>

With the danger averted, the crowd all applauded for Ryouma, the slime, and the adventurers. The announcer waited for the applause to end, then he continued.

<<It is a pity that the finals were interrupted midway through, but nevertheless, what an exciting match that was! It wouldn't have been strange for either side to win. I wonder if the key to victory was the participant's direction over their magical beast – Or no, – Perhaps, it was instead the trust between the participant and his magical beast that was the secret to victory?>>

The announcer said a few words before finally declaring the victor.

<<In this tournament's overall championship, entering as a slime-user who showed us many techniques and slime-variations, the winner is none other than – Participant Ryouma Takebayashi!>>

The crowd that was quietly listening all simultaneously cheered at the announcement, and they all praised Ryouma. In the midst of their praises, Ryouma waved his hand back and answered to their cheers, then he went back to the waiting room.

Chapter 29: End of the Tournament

After the match ended, I was made to wait in my room until the awarding ceremony. But before going to the room, I went outside first to put back the Emperor Scavenger Slime into the Dimension Home. It'd get in the way to leave it just like that after all.

It wasn't until an hour later when they called me out to the stage again. When I went back to the stage, there was a winner's podium at the center of the stage.

Including me, there were three of us all-in-all who would be going up the winner's podium. At the highest place was me. Then for the second place should be Matthew, but I'm not sure whether he'll come or not if he is still receiving treatment. But contrary to my expectations, Roodman was the one to take the 2nd position instead. The management said a few words in regards to this.

<<While Participant Matthew was receiving treatment, it was found out that he was in possession of a "Magic Tool of Conjuration" which is forbidden both by the law and by the regulations of the tournament – not to mention the fact that said participant's magical beast also went wild – As such, Participant Matthew has been disqualified."

At those words, the crowd grew noisy. They spat hateful words filled with disbelief, anger, and contempt, not trying one bit to hide their anger. They couldn't believe that of all people to cheat, it would actually be the guild master of the Gimuru branch's tamer guild himself.

Within that commotion, the officials of the tournament all appeared to apologize for the lack of security and their incapability to prevent foul play. They also expressed their regrets for Matthew as well as the tamer guild.

According to their explanation, apparently, the reason the magic beast went wild was because of the magic tool breaking. At first, Matthew couldn't move right after the match, but after being treated with some healing magic, he was

again able to move his arms a little, and he started acting odd.

Matthew tried to casually hide his left arm, but the healer found Matthew's wound suspicious, so he investigated the matter. When the healer did, what he found was the broken magic tool. The illegal use of a magic tool coming to light instead of some injury could be said to be Matthew getting his just desert.

Without the time to hide the evidence through injury or even the time to run, Matthew was immediately handed to the guards, who are now investigating where he got the magic tool from and how he managed to get pass through security.

When the awarding ceremony began, the atmosphere in the arena immediately changed, and the crowd applauded the three of us standing at the winner's podium. The ceremony here wasn't much different from back in Earth. The officials said a few words, then we were handed giant wooden planks where the amount of money won was written along with ceremonial swords that had no blade attached.

The ceremonial swords are the equivalent of a medal or trophy back in Earth. Likewise, the color also differs depending on one's position. Mine was gold, Roodman's was silver, while the third placer was bronze. On the body of the sword was engraved, 'Champion of the First Magic Beast Tournament'.

After that was mostly just us waving back to the crowd and bowing our heads as we answered back to the cheers until the ceremony finally ended.

When I got back to the storehouse, I answered some questions from the officials. The first question was in regards to how I would be receiving the prize money. I could apparently get it in cash if I were to just wait a bit, but I just told them to deposit it via the merchant guild.

The next question was in regards to the slimes, but I just told them to talk with the research facility like I said before.

The last question was about whether I would like them to get rid of the people outside since they would probably crowd me if I were to just go out like this. There are some people who are able to go home while being surrounded, but I don't want the trouble, so I decided to have them buy me time while I escape via dimension magic.

After that, I was informed that Elia and the others asked them to inform me to wait. So for the time being, I couldn't go home. Times like this make me wish I had a cellphone. For a moment, I wondered whether I couldn't do the same thing with magic, but it probably wouldn't work out well. Ah, wait a moment, right…

It wasn't related to cellphones, but while waiting, I decided to write a letter. Before ten minutes could even pass, however, Elia and the others came. We didn't meet elsewhere, they just went directly here in the storehouse.

"Ryouma-san, congratulations!" [Elia]
"You did it!" [Kanan]
"Good job. And thanks for a while ago." [Riera]
"I was really surprised when the axe came flying." [Elia]
"I was more surprised when Ryouma-kun flew though." [Michelle]
"Congratulations on winning the tournament, Ryouma-sama." [Sebasu]
"Thank you very much." [Ryouma]

Around this time, Elia noticed the object in my hands.

"Hmm? Oh, were you writing something? I hope we didn't disturb you." [Elia]
"Oh, no, it's nothing like that. I just thought I should ask an acquaintance of mine to find out what would happen to the tamer guild's guildmaster from now on." [Ryouma]

It seems like it'd take a lot of effort to walk around the town myself after all.

"Are you curious?" [Riela]
"Well, it was a big incident. And Matthew isn't a stranger either." [Ryouma]
"Are you close?" [Miyabi]
"Nah." [Ryouma]

I firmly rejected the idea.

"More like enemies if anything. It's mostly one-sided from him though… Regardless, I am curious about what'll happen from now on." [Ryouma]

As I said that, the officials who cleared the people outside went back to tell me the people were gone. So with that, we decided to leave through Dimension Magic.

When we got out of the service entrance, I asked a rimel bird to take the letter. Then we teleported through Dimension Magic to the front of the town gate. Before it grew noisy, we teleported again until we got to my house.

“We’re here!” [Ryouma]
“That’s fast.” [Kanan]
“Is this Ryouma-san’s house?” [Elia]
“Huh? Elia, you haven’t been here yet?” [Riera]
“Ah… Now that you mention it, it was only after Elia left that I built the house. So it should be Elia’s first time here as well.” [Ryouma]
“At that time, this place was nothing but tunnels.” [Elia]

But now there was a house and even a bamboo thicket. I had to work hard in order to use up my magic power after all.

“For the meantime, let’s go inside.” [Ryouma]

As I said that, I invited Elia and the others inside. I wonder what their impressions will be.

“How to put it…” [Riera]
“It doesn’t feel like it’s been lived in…” [Miyabi]
“I think it’s really clean.” [Kanan]
“Erm, wasn’t it just made to be simple?” [Michelle]
“It feels like a house no one’s lived in.” [Elia]

I guess it’s only natural. After all, there aren’t even any chairs or desks or even shelves. Actually, I don’t use this place much.

The place I really live in is actually in the hidden path ahead of the kitchen. So inside the tunnel in other words. From the outside, this house looks like the place where I rest at, but it’s actually only being used to catch intruders.

The spears of the metal slimes would pour in from the gaps between the ceiling or the sleeping mist of the portion slimes would fill the house. There’s nothing to worry about though as I can easily order the slimes lurking at the ceiling to release the effects of their attacks, and they also won’t attack without my orders, so it’s safe.

As I told Elia and the others that the house is just being used to ward off

against criminals and that this place could also be entered through the passage in the training room in the cave to the side, I used ‘Teleport’, and I brought them to the hidden passage leading to the kitchen.

I thought of making some sort of hidden trick to open the hidden passage, but unfortunately, my so-called secret passage is just a passage behind a wall. It’s simple, but it’s hard to find. And it’s no inconvenience to someone like me who can use Dimension Magic too.

After a short walk with the Light Magic, Light, illuminating our path, we arrived at the living room I usually used. On the four sides of this room were rectangular papers pasted over rectangular-shaped bamboo. There were magic stones meant for lighting inside, so there’s plenty of light in the room.

After we sat on the couch made from a magic beast’s hide and filled with the fluff of the fluff slime, I paused to catch my breath.

“Fuu…”

Somehow, I feel burnt out after the tournament ended.

“Oh, right. I should bring out tea.” [Ryouma]
“In that case, please let me make it.” [Sebasu]
“Ah, thank you very much.” [Ryouma]

Just when I thought of making tea, Sebasu-san went ahead of me before I could even stand up; he left the room. Sebasu-san has come here many times before, so he already knows his way around. It’s already late anyway, so I might as well leave it to him…

“Oh, speaking of which, what about supper? Should I make something?” [Ryouma]
“Please don’t mind, Ryouma-san’s tired after all, so…!” [Elia]

As Elia answered, she suddenly made a face that seemed to say that she thought of something. I wonder what she’s thinking.

“Ryouma-san, if it’s no trouble, how about letting me make supper?” [Elia]
“You will?” [Ryouma]

I was a bit surprised, but the other girls started agreeing. I’m happy to have a

girl cook for me, but – and I'm sorry for being a bit rude – can Elia cook? As I was wondering whether I should ask that out loud or not, Elia sensed what I was thinking, and she glumly spoke.

"Please rest assured, Ryouma-san. I might not be able to cook as well as you, but I can definitely cook something edible. Even if I'm like this, I'll have you know that I'm good at Girl Power Class." [Elia]
"Girl Power Class?" [Ryouma]

It's been awhile since I heard Elia say something unique to this world, so for a moment, I was dumbfounded. I mean, it's not like I don't understand what she's trying to say, but what exactly is "Girl Power Class?"

After asking them for a while, apparently, "Girl Power Class" is close to the so-called "Home Economics" in Japan. Also, while the girls are having that class, the boys are apparently having martial arts training. The words "Girl Power" sounds like something students or alumni would use, but it sure feels odd in modern context.

But whatever. In any case, Elia will be making supper for today. I explained to Sebasu-san, who was busy making tea, what happened. After that, we went to check the ingredients in the kitchen.

"You can use any of the ingredients here as you please." [Ryouma]

The ingredients here come from the harvest in the farm, and then there's also the huge stock of ingredients that were bought to feed the goblins, so there should be more than enough.

"Ryouma-han, there seem to be things here I don't see even in my family's store… Like this pot for example. What exactly is inside it?" [Miyabi]
"That's a still experimental chili." [Ryouma]

As I was studying medicine from my grandparents' books, I came across a certain antidote for a poison plant. When I learned that its taste and smell was similar, I wondered to myself, "Couldn't I use this as chili if I just got rid of the poison?" So like that, I ended up researching it in my spare time.

But just because I thought of it, doesn't mean things would proceed smoothly. And as it turns out, because of the medicine mixed into to remove the poison,

there’s a bitter taste left in the mixture. The jar Miyabi is holding now is the best one I’ve made yet, but it’s too sour and tastes odd, so it’s still not complete.

For now, I usually just use it as sauce when cooking yakiniku or yakitori or as an insect repellant after mixing with alcohol.

“How about this wood-like thing?” [Riera]
“Riera, that’s a meguribushi.” [Miyabi]

Meguribushi is this world’s katsuobushi. Riera doesn’t seem to know about it, but Miyabi seems to know. But then again, there’s nothing odd about that since I bought it from her family.

Speaking of which, this meguribushi is made from fish caught at a certain season once a year in the village of the dragonewts. They seem to be using migratory fishes. The amount exported depends on the amount of fish caught and the local demand. And with the production time taking more than half a year, the price is fairly expensive. Which is why the Slime Den Restaurant rarely brings it out.

But I have more than enough for my own purposes, so there’re always some at home.

As I answered their questions one after another like this, I left them to Sebasu-san as I exited the kitchen. I’m looking forward to what they’ll make.

End: Home Cooking

Just as I was wondering what to do while Elia and the rest were busy preparing the food…

“What happened with you two?” [Ryouma]

When I looked behind me, I saw Kanan and Michelle exit the kitchen.

“Not getting in the way is also a form of support, you know.” [Kanan]
“Kanan is bad at cooking, you see. And as for me, well I’m bad at all the topics taught in Girl Power.” [Michelle]
“I don’t think that’s something to be proud of though.” [Ryouma]

So that’s why they’re here. Then in that case, how about I give them a tour of the house? After all, these two do seem like they’d be interested in the prototypes I have in the workshop and in the storeroom.

Thinking that, I tried to call out to them, but before I could, Sebasu-san walked out of the kitchen.

“Ryouma-sama, are you still here?” [Sebasu]
“Yes, what’s the matter?” [Ryouma]
“Do you have any claymore corns? The young ladies wish to use it for the salad.”
“It’s a bit early for harvest, but just a few pieces should be fine. Should I get some?” [Ryouma]
“Yes, please.” [Sebasu]

As Sebasu-san said that, he lightly bowed, and then he went back to the kitchen.

“Can we come too?” [Michelle]
“We’ll help out.” [Kanan]

Like that I ended up taking the two girls, and we teleported through my dimension magic. Our destination was the passage near the experimental district where the claymore corn fields were being cultivated.

“Please wait a moment. ‘Exchange’” [Ryouma]

In an instant, I immediately changed into my work outfit that was stored inside my Dimension Home through the dimension magic, ‘Exchange’. As my body and my arms grew heavier and my field of vision grew narrow, I knew that my magic was a success.

When the two girls saw that, they were shocked. Although it was only added protection over my body, from the outside, it still looked like I just transformed.

“I just changed my clothes with dimension magic.” [Ryouma]

I gave a rough explanation, but apparently, that’s not what they were shocked about.

“…Are those supposed to be work clothes? It just looks like an armor to me though.” [Kanan]
“It really doesn’t look like something you’d wear to pick some corns. You look like you’re about to go to war. I mean you even have a shield with you” [Michelle]

Well, it is true that this outfit covers the entire body from head until the tiptoes in metallic armor. And then there’s even a shield, which I made by transforming a lump of adamantite and then burying a plank of a king sticky slime’s hardening liquid to create a window I could peek out of. Aside from the basket on my back and the sickle I have in my right hand, everything else could be considered odd for someone going out to harvest crops. But that only holds true for normal crops.

“This much is needed in order to safely harvest claymore corns.” [Ryouma]
“Seriously? Is that really still a vegetable?” [Michelle]

When I said that, Michelle frankly replied.

I replied back that claymore corns are just regular corns that’ve mutated from too much fertilizer from the scavenger slimes, but I guess it’s only normal for her to be at a loss after hearing that.

Because claymore corns have been affected by magic power, the portion that could be eaten is about 1m long, making them look just like great swords. Moreover, claymore corns don't even need a month to grow to a consumable size. It can even be eaten raw. So with all that and how delicious it is, it's only natural that the duke and his family would praise it lots. At the same time, however, due to its faster growth, it also spoils faster. When that happens its kernels will become hard and will become unsuitable for eating.

Once the kernels harden, every individual piece will become sharp. Should pressure greater than what it can handle be applied to it, the claymore corn will blow up and scatter to the surroundings with enough force to kill a man. I tried it out with some store-bought shields and armors once, and the kernels actually managed to penetrate them. In fact, they were so tattered that anyone could tell that repair was impossible.

When I saw the strength behind those kernels, I couldn't help but liken them to the guns and rifles back in my previous world. If it weren't so delicious, there's no way I would bother cultivating such dangerous crops.

When I explained that to the two girls, they were finally able to understand why I would wear such heavy armor.

"In any case, I'll go and harvest some now. I'll come back immediately, so I'll be needing your help then." [Ryouma]

As I said that, I gripped the shield, and I teleported to the isolated room or the experimental room where the claymore corns were being grown. What appeared before me was a room with no entrance as wide as two classrooms, inside of which were full of giant corns.

There were several small holes above in the ceiling just like the ones you'd see on the walls of a music room, and several lights from the light magic, 'Light', could be seen here and there, keeping the room bright. Behind the ceiling were a number of light slimes, who poked their body out of the small holes, shining their light over the claymore corns. There were also water slimes who would water the crops in place of the sprinklers.

As I reinforced my shield and armor with ki, I approached the claymore corns. When I was close enough, I swung my sickle at one of the bigger crops.

“And safe! Now, I’ll just take this…” [Ryouma]

After I cut the claymore corn, I put it inside the basket on my back through ‘Telekinesis’. I did the same thing after that until I was able to gather 3 claymore corns. Then I went back to the Michelle and Kanan.

“Sorry for the wait.” [Ryouma]
“Ah, welcome back. Did you get some?” [Michelle]
“As you can see here, I’ve gotten some splendid ones.” [Ryouma]
“Uwa~ that’s really big. It’s my first time seeing corns so big.” [Kanan]
“You sure those won’t explode.” [Michelle]
“As long as you pick them before they spoil, they won’t explode.” [Ryouma]

After that, we teleported back to the kitchen. They didn’t want the surprise to be spoiled, so Michelle and Kanan were the ones to bring the claymore corns.

Afterwards, we went to the workshop and to the storehouse just as planned. First, we went to the workshop which I used for smithing and crafting. When we got there, a certain tool caught Kanan’s interest.

“Uwaa, what is this chisel? Not even my family has a chisel this luxurious…” [Kanan]

What caught Kanan’s attention was none other than the chisel I use for engraving. Chisels were normally made out of steel, but mine was made out of adamantite. It might look expensive, but since I was the one who gathered the materials and crafted it, it didn’t cost me a single penny. I did have to work hard though.

As for where I got the adamantite, I got it from the mining spot written in my inheritance. But since I was able to mine it from a shallower area, it was relatively easier. Well, at least compared to mining orihalcum and mithril anyway.

When I first went to the mining spot, I accidentally stepped near an undead snake’s nest, and over 10 of them came rushing at me. Naturally, I ran away. After I learned the advanced ice magic, ‘Blizzard’, I was able to freeze the undead snakes, and was finally able to arrive at the shallowest area in the deeper parts of the Great Forest of Shurus… The danger in the deeper parts is seriously no joke.

Going back to the topic.

A special hearth was needed in order to process the adamantite, but that was no issue.

The special hearth would normally require using a dragon's scales – which is known to be impervious to fire – for its interiors, making it extremely expensive. But in my case, I was able to get some scales from Rheinbach-sama's ignis dragon. As thanks, I would send some produce from time to time. Although he did tell me not to, since the dragon would apparently shed its skin periodically anyway.

After that I took aluminum oxide from the earth in the mine through the use of alchemy, and mixed it with the king sticky slime's concentrated hardening liquid plank. I molded the resulting compound into bricks, then I used those to build the hearth. For the interiors, I pasted the scales I received in three layers. And with that, the hearth was ready to go. I thought of using aluminum because I recalled it being resistant to fire and heat. When I tried it out for real, it was able to endure the heat, and it didn't show any signs of breaking.

After that, all that was left was an issue of patience and endurance. In any case, as I continued to process the adamantite, the end result was a durable and extremely easy-to-use chisel provided ki was used. But as a lot still relied on having good materials, it was still necessary to continue patiently practicing.

When I brought the two girls to the storeroom, Michelle noticed the magic formation drawn inside the garbage, and she immediately started talking fervently. It was especially fiercer when she found out about my prototype that made use of a magic formation that generated wind.

The magic formation only really gathered the surrounding air and sent it upwards. I'm only really using it to work as ventilation by bringing in air from the outside. As for the prototype model…

"I see. So by using the power of the wind, you were able to create a transportation device." [Michelle]
"It'll probably still take a year to finish though… Ah, please don't turn it on. You'll just end up crashing into the roof." [Ryouma]

In front of us now was the prototype model, the magic-formation-based

hovercraft that I created. However, on top of me just creating this based on some faint memory, the effect of the magic formation is too specialized and is also incomplete.

When Michelle saw the hovercraft, she fell into a deep thought. Kanan and I distanced ourselves a bit to give her some space as we talked about our own respective inventions.

Surprisingly, I found out that Kanan was actually able to make magic tools.

“I thought you couldn’t make magic tools?” [Ryouma]
“Actually, although I’m an enchantment magic specialist, there’s still a way for me to create magic tools. Since I can’t rely on my own magic, I just have to borrow someone else’s.” [Kanan]
“In other words, you’ll be imbuing the magic tool with someone else’s magic?” [Ryouma]
“Right. But the only ones who can use this method are enchantment magic specialists. Moreover, the person cooperating with me can’t be just anyone. If my compatibility with my partner isn’t good enough, then it’s not possible. Finding such a person is really difficult, so most people either give up or die before finding one.” [kanan]

Dying before finding? Is it really so difficult to find? When I said that, she replied, “That’s why I decided to go to the academy.” Apparently, she was hoping to meet a magician who could become her partner.

“But when I went to the academy, my partner aside, I couldn’t even enter a group. So I was really shocked when Miyabi invited me to join hers. After I joined them and talked about my situation, we tried it out with me and Elia, and as luck would have it, we actually succeeded… I really couldn’t believe my eyes back then.” [Kanan]

Kanan embarrassingly admitted that she actually cried because of how shocked and touched she was.

As we continued to talk like that, Sebasu-san entered the storehouse. Apparently, supper was ready so he came to call us. Michelle was still immersed in her thoughts, so Kanan had to forcefully shake her awake, and then we teleported back to the living room. The three girls, Elia, Miyabi, and Riera were

setting up the table, waiting for us.

After a short exchange, we went ahead and started eating. The menu was simple, including items such as salad, soup, and pasta, but regardless, they all looked delicious.

First, I tried out the soup.

"…Delicious and relaxing." [Ryouma]
"I'm glad you liked it." [Miyabi]
"We made a lot, so go ahead and eat as much as you want." [Riera]

Looks like the ones in charge for this soup were Miyabi and Riera. If I'm correct then they should've boiled some vegetables along with some dashi made from cut jerky. In other words, it's the meat and potato stew of this world. If one tried, I'm sure it could be made even while camping outside. It's somewhat reminiscent of minestrone soup, but there seems to be something different…

"Hmm… did you add some meguribushi?" [Ryouma]

When I asked whether they made the dashi out of the meguribushi, it turned out my conjecture was correct.

"You did well finding out. We heard from Miyabi that Ryouma-dono likes dragonewt food, so we tried using meguribushi." [Riera]

After Riera's response, I took another sip. As I thought, it's really delicious.

Next let's try the salad.

On the dish before me were vegetables and claymore corn stir-fried in butter, mixed with croutons. The texture of the vegetables complemented well with the croutons'. And the aromatic dressing made from seeds roasted sour did a wonderful job bringing out the taste of the vegetables, resulting in an otherworldly delicious salad.

When I gave my thoughts on the dish, Sebasu-san bowed his head. Apparently, Sebasu-san was the one in charge for the salad.

Then finally came the pasta's turn. According to Sebasu-san, he didn't help out at all except for some final tasting, the whole dish being done solely by Elia, who worked on it full of devotion from start to finish. The dish doesn't look bad at all,

but…

“Meat sauce?” [Ryouma]
“I based it on the pasta you served during your store’s opening party.” [Elia]
“Now that you mention it, I did bring out something like that… I can’t believe you still remember that.” [Ryouma]
“It was delicious after all. That aside, please go ahead and taste it before it gets cold. I’ve seasoned it well.” [Elia]
“Then in that case, I’ll help myself.” [Ryouma]

It looks exactly like a meat sauce spaghetti. But how’s the taste? As I thought that, I twirled the pasta around my fork, and I took in a mouthful. When I chewed, I received a shock that left me speechless.

“R-Ryouma-san? Does it not taste good? I did taste it, but…” [Elia]

Elia panicked when she saw my appearance, but it didn’t taste bad at all. But with my current state, I was only able to say a few words.

“How nostalgic.” [Ryouma]
“Eh?” [Elia]

Although it looked exactly like a meat sauce spaghetti, the taste was a lot closer to the dandan noodles served at the Chinese restaurant near the company I worked at in my previous world. It was cheap, delicious, and had plenty of serving, so I dropped by frequently to buy that 400\ dish. Unfortunately, the place was shut down some time ago before I left my world, so I stopped being able to eat there. I’ve already completely forgotten about it actually. Eating this sure takes me back…

As spiciness and sourness with a hint of umami mixed together, nostalgia stirred within me as I gradually tasted the pasta. Of course, I ate it along with the soup and the salad. Seeing me like that, Elia and the others heaved a sigh of relief, and they continued eating.

After eating…

“I-It hurts…” [Ryouma]
“Well you did eat yourself full.” [Elia]
“You even had two more helpings of Elia’s pasta.” [Kanan]

After eating a little bit too much, we rested for a while and drank some tea. I didn't really feel like drinking, but there was still a cup of tea before me.

"That sure was delicious… and nostalgic." [Ryouma]
"I'm glad you enjoyed it." [Elia]

The overall combination was a bit odd, but it was definitely delicious. After I asked them how they made it, I figured I could put it on the restaurant's menu if Elia doesn't mind.

Actually, didn't she just use that chili-like ingredient I came up with in that dandan noodle-like pasta? If Elia could easily use an ingredient she tasted for the first time and come up with something delicious, wouldn't that mean that she's actually really talented at cooking?

After that, we talked a bit longer regarding various topics such as the tournament the cooking, the girls' training, and what they'll be doing from tomorrow. When Elia and the rest were about to go home, I thanked them again for the delicious supper, and I sent them off.

"See you tomorrow. Take care." [Ryouma]

Elia happily waved back to my words with a smile, and then she went back with Sebasu-san and the rest of the girls through dimension magic.

Now then… My stomach's finally calmed down a bit, so I think I'll do some light training before calling it a day…

End Status & Characters

TL Note: Strength –> Hit Points.

Ryouma’s Status at the End of Volume 4

The parentheses by the hit points and the magic power show the numerical difference since the previous update.

Name: Ryouma Takebayashi
Gender: Male
Age: 14
Race: Human

Hit Points: 12000 (+600)
Magic Power: 284000 (+64100)

Power: A
Speed: A
Defense: A
Mind: SSS
Resistance: A
Dexterity: SS
Luck: B

Basic Class Skills
Housekeeping Lv10
Etiquette Lv7
Arithmetic Lv5
Control Lv4
Torture Lv4
The Power of Life and Death Lv5
Guidance Lv3

Battle Class skills

Taijutsu Lv7
fencing Lv7
Spear Technique Lv4
Hunting Lv6
Staff Arts Lv6
Assassination Technique Lv7
Body Control Lv7
Qigong Lv5
Magic Battle Technique Level 5

*The ‘Hunting’ Skill is the synthesization of the two skills, ‘Trap’ and ‘Archery’.

Magic Class Skills

Slave Demon MagicLv5
Barrier Magic Lv3
Healing Magic Lv5
Alchemy Lv4
Potion Making Lv5
Construction Magic Lv5
Fire Magic Lv4
Water Magic Lv4
Wind Magic Lv4
Earth Magic Lv5
Neutral Magic Lv4
Electric Magic Lv3
Ice Magic Lv5
Poison Magic Lv4
Wood Magic Lv5
Light Magic Lv4
Dark Magic Lv5
Dimension Magic Lv5
Precise Magic Control Lv6
Increased MP Recovery Lv5
Chantless Invocation Lv5
Cursed Song Lv4

*Precise Magic Control is the synthesization of Magic Control and Magic Manipulation.

Production Class Skills

Pharmacy Lv7
Smithing Lv3
Engraving Lv2

Resistance Class Skills

Physical Resistance Lv8
Mental Resistance Lv9
Wellbeing Lv7
Stench Resistance Lv3
Charm Resistance Lv3

*Wellbeing is the synthesization of Poison Resistance, Disease Resistance, Sleep Resisstance, Cold Resistance, Heat Resistance, and the skill that led to the synthesization, Weakness Resistance.

Special Skill

Oracle Lv6
Survival Technique Lv5
Life Reinforcement Lv3
Super Recovery Lv5
Resistance Reinforcement Lv7
Musccle Reinforcement Lv1
Mental Concentration Lv6

Titles

Gekokujou (Note: A junior who overtakes his seniors.)
One who has overcome a life of misfortune.
The Gods' Favorite Child
Disciple of the Sage
Disciple of the Martial God

Divine Protection

The God of Creation, Gayn
The God of Life, Kufo

The God of Love, Rurutia
The God of Wine, Tekun
The God of Sleep and Death, Meltrize

Volume 4 Characters

This list includes the new chracters who have been introduced in V4. Even those who've only been mentioned once have been included.

Training Facility.

Dolt, Delt, Told
Teachers and veteran candle-makers.

Training Area

Grandpa Harold
Taijutsu teacher of the training facility. A former A Rank adventurer.
He is also a slave demon magician, having three B Rank magical beasts, the ogres, under him.

Barbet

Swordsmanship Teacher of hte training facility. A former knight.

Slime Research Facility

Paul Bilkins
Head of the Slime Research Facility. Former laboratory chief of the national magical beast research facility.

Alicia

A researcher of the research facility. The troublemaker of the facility.
Affiliated with the vegetation division that studies slimes like the fluff slime.

Crank

The man in charge of the security at the research facility. A former soldier.

Pete

General Manager of the Slime Research Facility

Magical Beast Tournament Participants

Horizon
Was in the same group as Ryouma in the preliminaries. He uses the trident snake, a snake-type magical beast.

Podro

The man should've fought against Ryouma. Uses the B Rank, Barbel Reindeer.

Jano

Ryouma's opponent in the second round. Known as Heaven's Noble, he is a pretty boy who prefers flying-type magical beasts. He has a good personality.

Roodman

Ryouma's opponent in the semifinals. He uses five ogres who are armed to the teeth. He has a steady fighting style.

Gimuru Guards

Crais

18-years-old; Man

A guard in Gimuru.

He graduated from the training facility and is already married.

He calls Ryouma, "Dad."

Others:

Riole – Riera's oldest brother.

Reole – Riera's older brother; the second son.